Images of Backwardness and Modernity: Identity and the Reproduction of Stereotypes in a South Italian Town

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Ph.D
University of Edinburgh
1990

This thesis was entirely composed by myself and is my own work

It was funded by a grant from the Economic and Social Research Council from 1983-1986.

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore the relationship between 'core' and 'periphery' in the context of a South Italian town called Grottaminarda. It focusses on the way in which the people deal, in their everyday lives, with the process of integration into an economy and culture which extends far beyond the boundaries of the local community to national and supra-national levels. My contention is that integration has brought people face to face with images and stereotypes of backwardness and modernity. Consequently these images have become an important part of their identity; of the way they place themselves and perceive themselves as being placed in the social world. In this situation, people's self-positionings are a matter of *struggle*.

Chapter One assesses the way in which the relationship between core and periphery has been approached in theory, and in the context of South Italy. The two approaches which have dominated - 'dependency theory' and 'action theory' are regarded as inadequate. The former is too mechanistic and economistic; the latter focusses too heavily on the interpersonal level and on the political arena. A new approach is suggested which shifts the analysis to the level of representation and identity. Living on the periphery is not just a matter of economic exploitation or political domination but is also a matter of the symbolic appropriations of a dominant culture.

Chapters Two and Three provide an historical account of the relationship between core and periphery both in South Italy generally (in Chapter Two) and at Grottaminarda in particular (in Chapter Three). In Chapter Two, particular attention is drawn to the classification of the South as backward. In Chapter Three an attempt is made to show at what point the complex of images of backwardness involved in this classification became part of the everyday life of local people.

Chapters Four and Five provide a basic picture of the geographical, demographic and economic characteristics of the community. The former suggests that the putatively objective and neutral categories used to describe these basic facts about the town should not be taken for granted, but rather questioned in much the same way as the stereotypes of the South with which the thesis is concerned. In Chapter Five, it is shown that the contemporary local economy is characterised by continued precariousness together with an increased dependency on wider economic spheres.

The next four chapters (Six to Nine) are the ethnographic 'backbone' of the thesis. The purpose of each is to describe the way in which the core images of backwardness and modernity have become part of people's everyday relationships. Each focusses on a particular set of relationships: the family and the life cycle; class and status; politics; and identity, and looks at the way in which people struggle for position in the core classification in the context of these relationships.

The penultimate chapter before the conclusions is an attempt to characterise this struggle through the interpretation of the town's involvement in a national television quiz programme. Every aspect of the event is revealing of the nature of core-periphery relations and of the way in which they are reproduced through images of backwardness and modernity. It is also extremely revealing of the subordinate position of Grottesi within this relationship. The thesis concludes by emphasising that any attempt to suggest that local people construct their own identity, must be tempered with the recognition that the odds are stacked against them: their own 'strategic emplacements' are made in the context of a classification that has already placed them in a subordinate position.

Preface

Riguardo po' a li male lenge ca pure s'appizzarrano a chello c'aggio ditto, nun se pò' ffa' auto ca cunzigliarle pe' mmò de darse nu pizzeco 'ncopp'a la panza, o allu meglio, come diceva pure la bonanema de mamma mia, di schiaffarce la faccia a chillo servizio.

(Roberto De Simone 1977: 14-15)

Origins

The origins of this thesis lie not just in the inherent interest in the location of the study - South Italy - but also in a concern with the theme of backwardness as manifested in a quite different location, the west of Ireland. In 1982, as an undergraduate, I carried out a study of a small village on the west coast of Ireland, involving 5 months fieldwork. The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between the externally imposed images and representations of the Irish - particularly in the west - as backward, and the internal self-image of the people in a particular community. The underlying premise was that the external representations were pernicious. I felt a sense of anger at portrayals of the Irish which were largely a product of the country's relationship with Britain.

Identifying the precise relationship between internal and external images proved to be a difficult task and the results were inconclusive. The experience of observing everyday life brought a recognition that communities have their own concerns the complexity of which makes it difficult to relate them to broad structural forces. Nevertheless, certain incidents, events and evidence led me to retain my sense that the constant reproduction of images of the west of Ireland as backward must have some effect at local level, on people's self-image and identity1. If not, then what grounds were there for regarding the images as pernicious? Were they not merely harmless stereotypes?

When given the opportunity to do postgraduate study, I decided to explore these themes further. In particular I wanted to look at the idea of backwardness, how it emerged, how it was reproduced and transformed and how it affected people's everyday lives at the local level. However, I decided *not* to continue the research in Ireland. Instead I chose to make a fresh start in an area in which I had little personal investment but which, structuraly speaking, was in a similar position within Europe. South Italy

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[1]One such incident involved a German tourist literally demanding, and being politely granted, a photograph of a local fisherman as he mended his boat. The image captured was the smiling face of an old man with craggy features and rough clothing framed in a traditional harbour scene. The image is mirrored in events described in Chapter Ten.

seemed the obvious choice, being commonly regarded as on the periphery and like the west of Ireland, backward and uncivilised.

Arrival

In September 1984, having completed a short reading course in Italian, I began my 15 month period of fieldwork with two months in Naples. Time was spent getting acclimatized, learning the language, accumulating literature and talking to academics. This last activity, I thought, would be the most important in establishing contacts that would lead me to a suitable fieldwork location. I specified the type of community I was looking for (e.g. in a rural area but affected by industrialisation and change). However, although they made useful comments, few actually suggested locations. They seemed to be unfamiliar with the tradition in British universities of intensive residential fieldwork and did not wholly appreciate my problem of actually making contacts with individuals in a specific community.

Finally I spoke to Ghiliberto Marselli, a sociologist at Naples University. His approach was much more practical. He spread a map of the Campania region out on the table and said,

- Let's pick five towns in each province. Visit them, take a look around, see which one smells right.

At first this rather intuitive approach did not appeal. I was suspicious of the kind of mystification of fieldwork that forms part of the folklore of the anthropological community. However, I lacked the knowledge and experience of the area and the language to organise things in any other way and and so took his advice.

Grottaminarda

Grottaminarda was the third place I visited. It immediately 'smelled right'. The bus from Naples rolled in off the motorway almost directly into the town centre. At the same time several brand new empty buses, just assembled (as I later discovered) at the nearby Fiat factory rumbled through the toll barriers headed for Turin. The landscape was dominated not by the old *campanile* (bell tower) and church, nor by the surrounding patchwork of smallholdings, but rather by the motorway itself, by new municipal housing, petrol stations, construction sites, cranes. Walking through the streets, people did *not* stare and ask stage-whispered questions of each other about my presence, as they had done in the other towns. A man apparently accustomed to giving directions asked if I wanted

any help. The overall atmosphere was not rural. This was not a town which could easily slot into any of the stereotypical portrayals of the South.

Studying the Town

As the early notes in my fieldwork journals testify, the initial period in the town was not a happy one. It was dominated by the powerful, overwhelming hospitality of a handful of families which at the time I did not understand. Each sought to monopolise the control of my activities in the town from the collection of information to eating arrangements and entertainment. It was difficult to refuse hospitality offered without giving offence, but unless I had, my understanding of the community would have been extremely restricted. Whatever the intentions of my hosts, the effects of their intentions were in fact to hold me at a distance. They effectively set limits to the information I received and the contexts in which I participated.

Gradually I managed to extricate myself from some of the restrictions that were entailed. However, despite the many friedships formed, I always felt to an extent held at arm's length, not by any sense of enmity or animosity towards me but precisely by the friendship and hospitality offered.

At the same time, I did develop another role in the community - that of *'studioso'* (scholar, researcher). Few people had any difficulty with the idea of a foreign researcher carrying out such a study - and I did not attempt to disguise in any way my aims. Locally it was regarded as a legitimate enterprise. A place was made available to me at the Town Hall to enable me to research archives and records. I spent a great deal of time there not only looking through these archives but also observing the comings and goings of, and talking to, local politicians, officials and workers, the public.

Language was a major problem. As a rule, I listened to dialect but was spoken to in Italian. People were reluctant to help me learn dialect - other than for their own amusement in hearing me speak it. It was regarded, significantly, as improper and uncouth for someone in my position. Hence it was not until the end of the 15 month period that I began to become fluent in dialect. Again this had important implications for the information gathered. Especially in the early stages it meant missing out on dialogue that was not directed at me or in which I was not directly involved; or it meant that those present had to translate constantly for my benefit. I greatly appreciated their efforts and am in their debt. In the end however, 15 months is much too short a period to become

properly conversant in another culture and I hope that my efforts do no injustice to the people of Grottaminarda.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1. An Approach to Core and Periphery - I

In 1965 Sydel Silverman pointed out that "...one of the most strategic yet formidable problems in the anthropological study of complex societies is the relationship of the parts to the whole of such societies" (Silverman 1965: 272). Very soon after this in the late '60's and early '70's a plethora of studies emerged in the social sciences looking precisely at this 'part-whole' relationship. Their emergence was closely related to the 'post-functionalist' recognition that societies were not (or were no longer, depending upon one's viewpoint) the bounded and static units they had been portrayed to be. Rather, they were fluid and changing through history, formed parts of wider systems and were affected by external forces. This literature ranged from the vast and varied forms of 'dependency' or 'underdevelopment' theory to the more modest attempts of anthropologists to go 'beyond the community' (cf Boissevain & Friedl 1975) using models based on theories of action and process.

Yet, in 1980, in an article on the "micro-organisation of backwardness" in Sardinia, Bodemann & Allahar state (with particular reference to studies of underdevelopment and dependency) that "... these new studies ... have generally failed to examine the impact of ... global processes at the local level." (Bodemann & Allahar 1980: 459).

The principal aim of this thesis is to explore this relationship further through the study of a small peripheral town in South Italy. What is the nature of its integration into a wider core economy and culture? And how do the inhabitants of the town deal with involvement in this relationship in their everyday lives? To this end, in the following chapter I will develop my own approach to 'core and periphery' by assessing the assessment by Bodemann above.

It is eminently clear, as will be described in subsequent chapters that Grottaminarda is *not* an isolated community with 'its own' economy, polity and social structure and this has been so for many years. In other words then, the town is deeply involved in a much wider arena than that circumscribed by the boundary of *il comune* (the smallest administrative unit) and the people themselves are well aware of this. And so, in order to reach any understanding of people's lives in the town it is necessary to *place*

them within the context of this wider arena - in other words in the context in which they place themselves and recognise themselves as being placed.

However, what is not at all clear is how best to do this. How can this situation be described and interpreted in such a way that brings out the nature of the relationship between Grottaminarda and the 'core' culture into which it is integrated ? In order to answer this question it is necessary to look at the meaning of 'core-periphery' and at the ways in which other observers have attempted to conceptualise the relationship that the terms predicate.

2. The Meaning Of Core and Periphery

In this study I intend to use the terms 'core' and 'periphery' as a means of describing 'cultures'. The 'core' culture is represented by the economically and politically dominant centres of Rome and the north; by the Italian state; more generally by northern Europe, the EEC and 'international capitalism' in its specifically Italian manifestation. It is taken for granted that this core seeks to extend its tentacles to influence and control the 'periphery', represented by southern Italy - economically and politically marginal, dependent, and stereotypically regarded as 'backward'.

However, this formulation is not without problems, problems which are inherent in the use of terms like 'core' and 'periphery'. Throughout the history of the social sciences, dichotomies have been used by which to classify and distinguish societies, communities, regions, countries and aggregates of countries. The best known examples are Durkheim's 'organic and mechanical solidarity', Tönnies 'Gesellschaft' and 'Gemeinschaft', the traditional-modern and folk-urban oppositions of the Chicago School - as well as a host of other dichotomies like those between civilized and primitive, advanced and backward, developed and underdeveloped, autonomous and dependent. It seems to me that the opposition between core and periphery is the latest in this long line of dichotomies. [1]

It would of course, be ridiculous to lump all these oppositions together; to suggest that the concerns of all social theorists from Tönnies to Andre Gunder Frank have been identical. However, whatever the intentions of any individual theorist and the subtleties of his or her argument, the continuity, and congruity of structure, in the representations they adopted must be recognised and accounted for. Why have these

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[1] see appendix 4 for list of these dichotomies and their associated characteristics and qualities

oppositions had such a pervasive influence in the classification of types of society? and why are they so readily subsumed into the same stereotypical classification?

In answering this question it is not my intention to debunk these representations; to suggest, as Chapman does in the context of Gaelic Scotland, that their power derives from their own enduring structure rather than from the qualities and characteristics they classify (cf. Chapman, M. 1979: 209). Instead, rather than reify the classification or regard it as somehow false, it is necessary to try to understand the relation it bears to a perceptible reality.

Firstly then, I would suggest that the oppositions tend to be subsumed into the same classification because they are very basic, taken-for-granted categories. They are intuitively appealing and are adopted 'naturally' because it is assumed that they accurately describe a real difference between types of society. They have ceased to be regarded as representations and have become names. Consequently it becomes difficult to discuss them without lapsing into tautology since the terminology presupposes the difference it sets out to describe: to say that the core is central and the periphery marginal is to say very little. In the same way, to say that modernity is defined by lack of community is merely to say that it is not traditional which of course is already known. Yet, I would suggest that these representations only assumed their particular power in the late 19th Century with the rise of evolutionism and positivistic science, which gave an impetus to ideas of unilinear progress that is still strong today.

Secondly, moreover, the difference that is being described is usually that between 'them' and 'us'. The terms are defined from 'our' point of view. The 'core' is what 'we' are, the 'periphery' is what is different from 'us'.

Thirdly, there is an evaluative element to the classification. The terms are asymmetrical - they describe a hierarchy, an unequal distribution - of civilisation, of development, of power, of resources. The core tends to be seen as positive, the periphery as negative; the core is defined by what it has and does, the periphery by what it lacks and has done to it. That the evaluation is sometimes inverted such that the qualities of the periphery are elevated above those of the core does not contradict this assessment. Rather these inverted evaluations tend to be nostalgic or romanticised appeals to the 'lost community' and even in their attempt to exalt 'things peripheral' there is the same categorical denigration. The evaluation says less about the periphery than about the relation that those in search of lost communities hold towards the periphery.

It is in this wider context of *representing* the relationship between 'them' and 'us' that the terms 'core' and 'periphery' find their meaning. To identify them as representations rather than 'pure' descriptions or neutral tools for analysis and, moreover, to recognise them as *evaluative,* is not to dismiss them. On the contrary it is to recognise that they have effects. They play a part in the reality that is represented and are reproduced and transformed under specific economic and social conditions.

It is necessary to keep all of this in mind throughout the following discussion. In the context of South Italy, core and periphery cannot be seen as abstract concepts nor as discernible entities. Rather they are one way of representing a relationship which has conditioned the history of the whole country since its Unification in 1861. The many other representations through which this relationship has been articulated since that time, have contributed to its reproduction and transformation: North-South; civil-barbaric; industrial-rural; *avanzato-arretrato* (advanced-backward); *città-campagna* (city-country); *freddo-caldo* (hot-cold). All of these dichotomies and many more, have played a part in the representation and classification of southern Italian society. It is my aim to show how they have been manifested in the lives of the people of Grottaminarda, a single town in Southern Italy.

To return then to the point at which this section began, that is, with the notion that 'core' and 'periphery' are interrelated cultures: having stressed that the terms do not designate *entities* but are a means of representing a relationship, it would appear that to call them 'cultures' would be contradictory. However, in using the term 'culture' I do not intend to refer to geographically discrete populations (even if they have a strong geographical referent) but to ways of being, acting and thinking embodied in social relationships.

3. Different Approaches to Core and Periphery

3.1. Introduction

Having looked at the broad context within which the terms 'core' and 'periphery' must be understood and the problems entailed in using them, let us turn now to look more closely at the way in which they have been used in concrete studies of societies and social relations in peripheral Europe, in the Mediterranean and particularly in South Italy.

3.2. The Functionalist Approach

3.1.1. Standard Criticisms

The standard critique of the functionalist approach to the Mediterranean is that the core-periphery relationship is simply *not considered at all.* The reasons given for this are that the early anthropologists and ethnographers of Europe were deeply embedded in the tradition of their teachers who themselves had generally studied so-called 'primitive' societies and had tended to represent them as isolated, functioning and integrated wholes. Transposing ways of conceptualising these societies onto what is now regarded as a wholly inappropriate situation, the Mediterraneanists tended to 'tribalise' Europe:

> Trained on literature dealing with comparatively slow-changing, isolated, undifferentiated non-Western societies, anthropologists are often ill equipped for the complexity of Europe ... consequently, many have sought refuge in villages, which they have proceeded to treat as isolated entities.
>
> (Boissevain, J. 1975: 11).

The failings of functionalism in Mediterranean studies have also been summed up by Davis who regards them as being four-fold:

1. Its lack of comparative perspective;
2. Its lack of historical perspective;
3. The choice of remote/isolated villages as fieldwork sites and the consequent ignoring of urban situations and of the relations between *"bourgeois and villageois";*
4. The failure to conceptualise peasant societies as "part-societies encapsulated in nation states" (Davis J. 1977: 5-8).

Most of these failings he puts down to "the desire [of anthropologists] to be as primitive as every other colleague" (ibid: 7). Similar criticisms have been made by many others - Silverman 1975: viii; Boissevain and Friedl 1975 passim; Boissevain 1979.

3.1.2. People of the Sierra

It would be convenient to join this chorus of criticism of functionalism and of its main exponents in Mediterranean anthropology. However, while this assessment is generally true, there is a sense in which it is an easy stereotype which ignores the fact that in some cases 'core-periphery' relations *were* considered by the functionalists. One such case is the study of Andalucía, *The People of the Sierra* by Pitt-Rivers, the 'founding father' of Mediterranean anthropology who is himself frequently criticised for most of the failings listed by Davis.

In fact, the expressed aim of the book is precisely to shed light on the relation between 'Alcalá' and the wider structures into which it was integrated (Pitt-Rivers 1971: 208-9) and the first two chapters are specifically devoted to this end. The central idea is that there exists a *tension* between the values of the community and those of an alien authority. The former are based on the principles of proximity and a moral notion of the equality of honour; on the common nature of those who belong to the *pueblo*, on personalistic relations of friendship, kinship and neighbourhood etc. On the other hand, the State embodies and attempts to impose values which are impersonal, abstract, bureaucratic and authoritarian. There is thus a clash, or potential clash, whenever the State seeks to put into effect its laws.

For Pitt-Rivers, this is a structural problem which must resolve itself in a balanced and integrated way. Resolution is brought about by the mediation between the two sets of values through those who are *in* the community but who are oriented *outwards*, that is, the ruling group of officials and the wealthy. As Pitt-Rivers puts it in an oft-quoted passage:

> The resulting conflict is resolved through a social personality who possesses an effective relationship with the pueblo, with the ruling group of the pueblo and with the representatives of the law outside the pueblo ... the tension between the state and community is balanced in the system of patronage ... Through the system of patronage, the will of the state is adapted to the social structure of the pueblo.
>
> (ibid: 155)

Many of the problems of this kind of approach are contained in this statement. To begin with, it is *static*. (cf. Davis 1977: 242-3 and SERG 1981: 57). Thus while Pitt-

Rivers recognises the importance of history and the diachronic view (ibid: 211) the overwhelming emphasis of his study is on stability and equilibrium, rather than on change. Consequently he does not consider the possibility that through the existing tensions in the relationship between core and periphery and mediated by the ruling group in the pueblo, the nature of the relationship might itself be changed (cf. Silverman 1965 and below). As we will see subsequently, the 'tension' between core and periphery cannot be seen as a permanent condition which is continually 'resolved' between two opposed but seemingly equal partners. Rather, the particular historical circumstances which have brought state and community together necessitate mediation and adaptation which themselves, in their turn, create the conditions for new kinds of relationship between the two.

Secondly, there is a tendency to emphasise the jural-political level and patronage as the essential means by which core and periphery are related. Discussion is of laws, systems of sanctions, authority etc.

In addition, in at least two senses, the question of power is omitted: the two sets of values are set up as conflicting *but equal* and the degree to which certain values might prevail or become suppressed is not sufficiently dealt with; and if it is true that conflict is resolved, the possibility that this resolution tends to serve the interests of a particular group is not discussed.

However, despite these problems there is nevertheless a recognition that the state and community should not be seen as separate structures and that patronage is only one aspect of the relationship:

> To distinguish the two structures is to make an abstraction ... The two systems interlock, not as juxtaposed groups of personalities but as juxtaposed systems of sanctions which operate with relative force upon the individual in every situation and define, through the balance they strike, his social personality.
> (ibid: 155-6)

Thus it is through the *relationship* between local and national levels that relationships within the community are created and reproduced; and in being brought together, the two sets of values affect *all* the relationships in which individuals are involved "from the relations of the sexes to the medical techniques, and from the institution of friendship to that of the bandit" (ibid: 213). This insight will be important for the development of my own approach to core and periphery later in this chapter.

2. Post-functionalist Approaches to Core and Periphery in Anthropology

3.2.1. Introduction

As we have seen, the critics of Pitt-Rivers were numerous. However, how did they seek to improve upon the formulations of their predecessors, particularly in conceptualising core-periphery relations?

In the first instance few anthropologists seriously addressed themselves to the issue at all. Hence the calls for its study came in the late 1970's and early '80's (Boissevain and Friedl 1975; Davis 1977; Boissevain 1979; Bodemann 1980). There were a few exceptions to this which will be considered subsequently (Silverman 1965; Schneider, Schneider and Hansen 1972; Blok 1974). However, for the most part, there was little attempt to make the 'part-whole' relationship the centre of attention.

Yet there was one area in which it did emerge as important although it was not itself the focus of attention: the study of patronage and of the political arena in general. In focussing on patronage in the study of southern Europe, anthropologists were picking up and developing themes set out by Pitt-Rivers. Their aim was to define and describe patronage as a particular kind of interpersonal relationship. They sought to identify the parties to the relationship (patron and client); the roles each had and the requirements of these roles; the contexts in which the relationship operated; its relation to other forms of social relation (e.g. kinship and friendship) (cf. Wolf 1966; Boissevain 1966; Galt 1974; Weingrod 1967-8).

Simultaneously, at a more general theoretical level, they were attempting to effect a break from the tradition in anthropology represented by Pitt-Rivers. They sought to adopt an approach which situated itself within the movement of social life, rather than in sets of values which seemed, out of nowhere, to impose sanctions on, and thus determine the behaviour of, individuals and groups. Thus the relationship between community and state, which Pitt-Rivers had regarded as so important in all areas of social life, was largely dropped from the debate. Instead they looked at the actions and interactions of patrons, clients, mediators and brokers, in their everyday lives. In doing so they took, in my view a retrograde step, at least as far as the study of core-periphery relations was concerned. I will attempt to illustrate why in the following sections.

3.2.2. Patronage and Community-Nation Relations

In order to put my criticisms on a concrete foundation, I will begin by giving a more detailed account of the kinds of questions addressed in the study of patronage. It is not my intention to provide a full account of the phenomenon or to discuss the details of related issues. These have been well documented by other authors. Rather, the aim is to assess the extent to which the literature on patronage can contribute to an understanding of the nature of the relations between local and supralocal levels.

Towards the end of a detailed article on patronage in Sicily, Boissevain describes patronage as "a system of communication which is parallel to the official channels of government" and which enables Sicilians to bypass the rigidity of the legal and bureaucratic system, the latter tending to conflict with the requirements of traditional justice (Boissevain, J. 1966: 29-30). Here then, the influence of Pitt-Rivers is evident. This is another way of saying that "the will of the state is adapted to the [local] social structure" (Pitt-Rivers op cit).

However, it is apparent from the rest of the article that it is not this accommodation between levels with which he is primarily concerned. Instead, his aim is to substantiate a formal definition of patronage as a 'system' described in terms of the interaction between individuals. In this definition there is no mention of the relationship between core and periphery, nor even of a mediating elite who occupy a particular structural position in society. Rather there is only a description of face to face relations, a contract between two people that is repeated throughout society:

> Patronage is founded on the reciprocal relations between patrons and clients. By patron I mean a person who uses his influence to assist and protect some other person who then becomes his client.
> (Boissevain, J. 1966: 18)

Moreover, if there is asymmetry in the relationship, this is not to be taken as implying a difference in social position. "Most persons in fact occupy roles as both patron and client" (ibid: 24). The middle-man or broker is described as essential to the system, yet at the same time, a broker is anyone who is "in a position to place two people ... into a mutually beneficial relationship from which he derives profit" (ibid: 24-25). Through these relationships a system of overlapping networks of friends and 'friends of friends' is formed and is manipulated in order to achieve specific ends.

There are both conceptual and empirical problems with this emphasis on the interpersonal level and on the explication of patronage as a system.

To begin with, the focus on the interpersonal level results in a failure to escape one of the major problems of functionalism discussed earlier - that of regarding communities as isolated. The central thrust of the analysis to understand a *local* system and *local* forms of social action rather than to look at the relationship between these and the larger whole. Moreover, inasmuch as relations outside the community are considered they are portrayed as consisting of *interpersonal* linkages with influential individuals: the reader is asked to imagine chains of relations from peasant to patron to parliamentary candidate and minister, along which flow important strategic resources. Alternatively these relations are seen as being with either 'enemies' or 'remote and impersonal authorities'.

The aim here is *not* to say that such chains do not exist nor that the 'outside world', to Sicilians, is not hostile and impersonal. As Boissevain's examples show, individuals *do* manipulate chains of relations and the world *is* often hostile (through the violence of the mafia, for example). Further, this is indeed the idiom in which things are conceived and acted upon locally. There is thus an appealing tangibility about this interpretation. But the point is, as both Davis (1977: 150) and Gilsenan (1977) have shown in criticising the literature on patronage, that the "the local ideological model cannot be used to analyse itself" (ibid: 168). To understand the nature of the forces which are seen to demand the use of patrons or people of influence, it is not enough to rely solely on the accounts of Sicilians of these forces.

Boissevain mentions that the local elite did at one time form a patron group, but that the situation became more complex with people of low prestige coming to occupy positions of influence which enable them to act as patrons also. At this point a more detailed account of the way in which the conditions of existence of patronage were changing and under the influence of what forces would have been more appropriate. However, because Boissevain is seeking to explain *patronage* and explain it at the interpersonal level, such issues are obscured.

What emerges is a formal model produced by the selection of a few traits which characterise patron-client relations at an interpersonal level. It tends to be assumed then that the model, being formal and abstract, can be applied to diverse historical and cultural situations. However, as Gilsenan points out precisely through being given such

quasi-universal application, the model loses all saliency and becomes "a concept for all seasons" (Gilsenan 1977: 167)[1]

In a study of the island of Pantelleria, Galt remains more faithful to Pitt-Rivers' analysis, emphasising more strongly the emergence of patronage as related to the relationship between community and nation. He states:

> Patron-client relations come into play any time a villager ... must deal with institutions which are outside his local realm or which have links to the world outside the island's boundaries.
> (Galt 1974: 185)

Weingrod too is concerned to show the changing nature of patronage as communities become progressively more integrated into nation-states. He gives a clear historical account of this process, showing the importance of a number of crucial factors in changing the nature of relations between the community and the wider context: emigration, involvement in a consumer economy, better communications, increasing numbers in higher education, the influence of 'core' culture via fashion and the media, the influence of the welfare state and of party-political organisation etc.

Yet, as he acknowledges, by concentrating on patronage rather than on the above process, the field is narrowed and its significance is once again obscured. Patronage is still seen as an "'intervening mechanism' between the local community and the nation" (Weingrod, A: 398) and the 'gaps' between levels give rise to a category of mediators who 'bridge' them by monopolising access to the resources on either side of the divide. Again we return to the interpersonal level and to an abstract concept - the gap - which has the power to generate social forms. But to quote Gilsenan again:

> mediators are not generated by gaps but by transformations of the economic and political systems such that, for example, a new class or stratum arises out of specific conditions and structures because of specific factors.
> (op cit: 24)

In summary, it seems to me that anthropologists studying patronage have tackled the issue from the wrong angle. They sought to identify a 'type' of relationship, which seemed to them to characterise Mediterranean politics, by means of interpersonal criteria. As a result, they became caught up in an abstract and formal-definitional dispute

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[1] This kind of ahistorical, trait-selecting approach has been criticised by others notably Davis who says: "The point is this: there are assumptions of continuity - historically and geographically - which are not spelled out and which should be argued if an impression of pot pourri is to be avoided" (Davis 1977: 253) (see also SERG 1981: 56)

which was ahistorical and ignored the social and economic specificities of individual situations.

In my view a shift was required such that, not patronage, but core-periphery relations, became the *centre* of analysis. Such a shift would mean that studies of patronage would be insightful precisely to the extent that they shed light on the real historical processes and structural relationships in which local communities are involved. In this way, precise definition of the nature of patronage becomes superfluous.

3.2.3. 'Action theory' - Conceptual Foundation for the Study of Patronage

As mentioned above, the study of patronage in anthropology emerged in the context of a new theoretical approach which sought to break from functionalism. So far this theoretical approach has not been explicitly discussed. Yet the major criticism to emerge in the previous section is a theoretical one: that the focus on the interpersonal level is for various reasons problematic. Therefore, in order to clarify my own position, it is necessary look more closely at the conceptual foundations of the study of patronage. In doing so the intention is not simply to criticise the approach - which I will call 'action theory' - but to assess its relevance for understanding core-periphery relations. Some conception of the dynamics of these relations is required. Therefore, a theory or approach which attempts to capture the movement of social interaction is extremely significant.

The three major exponents of 'action theory' are, in my view, Boissevain, F.G. Bailey and Frederick Barth. For the sake of continuity I will concentrate again on Boissevain although the other two are his precursors and he acknowledges his debt to them.

Boissevain's position is set out in a volume of essays called *Friends of Friends:*

> My discussion ... concentrates on the way in which interpersonal relations are structured and influenced, on the way individuals, seen as social entrepreneurs seek to manipulate these to attain goals and solve problems, and in the organisation and dynamism of the coalitions they construct, to achieve their ends.
> (Boissevain, J. 1974: 3-4)

Boissevain presents us with an example of a Sicilian school teacher making use of his personal networks to avert an attack on his honour and social position. Now according to the author, the example serves to illustrate not only the nature of Sicilian networks of kin, friends and patrons but also that such manipulations are a "basic form of social behaviour" (ibid:3) and that recognising this is "common sense" (ibid: 7).

The first thing to notice about these kinds of statements is the level at which they are being made. Thus we are not concerned with forms of interaction in Sicily but rather with forms of interaction *per se*. What are the implications of this view?

Firstly, it seems to me that in describing a form of behaviour as basic, we are inevitably led to the question of its *nature*. According to Boissevain what is *natural*, is that the action of individuals in society is self-interested and manipulative. Yet if this is the case, what is there left to ask? We already know in advance that everywhere we go we will find self-interested manipulators.

Secondly, the emphasis on the individual in interaction with others should be noted. As mentioned, the aim of the action theorists was to put people back into the study of society; to give back to individuals the individuality they had been denied by the Durkheimian tradition in anthropology with its rules, norms and sanctions. As can be clearly seen here however, the 'individual' presented here is a very specific kind of person: he/she is a self-interested, choice-making, rational entrepreneur who proceeds in life through transactions and manipulations; who is able to calculate in advance the probable outcome from a range of possible choices and then act in accordance with whichever of these will be most beneficial to him/herself.

Thus paradoxically, freeing the individual from the constraints of 'society' merely results in their trapping him/her in the teleological necessity of *homo economicus*.

It is not my aim to suggest that in a given situation individuals are not self-seeking or manipulative. They may well be so and for a large part of the time. Moreover, it is probably true that this was not recognised by functionalism. However, to put forward this view of individuals as basic; as a quasi-metaphysical standpoint from which to understand and predict social behaviour seems to me to be to *advocate* such behaviour; to accept it as legitimate while purporting to be presenting a neutral, 'common sense' viewpoint.

Thirdly, as a model of human activity *per se,* this view can presumably be applied to all individuals and societies regardless of different historical conditions or of social differences (e.g. of class, status, age or sex). It is thus a transcendent model - an abstraction from history and from practical activity. Consequently (i) it has such wide application that it is rendered meaningless; (ii) it fails to break from the emphasis on the status quo which was so apparent in functionalism; and (iii) it ignores the possibility that the ability to manipulate may be a function of power or privilege.

Fourthly, when it comes to the application of this model to real situations, a significant contradiction emerges: on the one hand entrepreneurial, self-seeking activity is presented as a generalised form of behaviour and is thus presumably applicable to all individuals; on the other hand, in many concrete analyses such activity is presented as the *distinguishing* characteristic of a certain category of person, namely the mediator or broker; the 'gatekeeper' situated at the 'synapses' or intersections of important networks (see Boissevain 1974: 147ff; Bailey 1971; Wolf 1966). They cannot have it both ways.

Moreover, it is necessary to consider the type of research situation in which Boissevain has been involved: in Sicily at least, the view that 'man' is a self-interested entrepreneur is most definitely part of local ideology. And Sicilians would certainly apply this characterisation to everyone regardless of their social position. However, it is scarcely an adequate account of Sicilian social relations to attribute this to a generalised human disposition. Rather, it would perhaps be more fruitful to regard individualism and calculation as socially instituted dispositions with specific characteristics in different societies with different histories. Again then, we see an example of the local ideological model being used to analyse itself.

At no point in *Friends of Friends* is Boissevain specifically concerned with the relations between core and periphery. However, he does make it clear that such wider relationships must be understood at the interpersonal level:

> As villages, towns and cities develop at points where communication channels - roads, rivers and railroads - meet, so various social forms develop at points where important networks intersect. These points of intersection are persons.
>
> (Boissevain op cit: 147)

Brokers are crucial here. They "bridge the gaps in communication between persons, groups, structures, even cultures" (ibid: 148). It would appear that the method for treating all of these relations is the same.

It is true that each of these levels cannot be linked without the involvement of people. However, this does not mean that the only way to look at the relations between them is at the interpersonal level, far less in terms of a very specific theorisation of the nature of that level. Again we see that the function of these crucial individuals is an abstract one - they 'bridge gaps' -, while historical and structural conditions are secondary. Finally the idea of cultures having 'points of intersection' and being mediated by brokers is extremely dualistic.

As a consequence of all of these problems, Boissevain ignores the possibility that through the mediating activity of individuals such as brokers, the relations between persons, groups structures etc. is *transformed* such that the conditions of existence of those brokers are altered (possibly to their extinction) and the relationship must then be understood on very different terms.

In the case of South Italy, and particularly in my own fieldwork, it will be seen that while certain individuals continue to exert a considerable influence on the distribution of resources - particularly those of the State - more important social and historical forces have transformed the relationship between southern towns and the nation, such that it is simply *inappropriate* to conceive of these levels solely in terms of the seemingly concrete and tangible linkages formed by strategically placed individuals.

To an extent here Boissevain has been misrepresented. In fact he acknowledges that he has asserted the primacy of the individual "rather heavily" (ibid: 8) and states that "most persons are also moral beings" and do certain things because they believe they are doing what is right. Hence "these moral values, as well as his social, cultural and physical environment form the constraints within which he acts" (ibid).

In my opinion it is difficult to see how this view can be maintained without contradiction. On the one hand obedience to the rule is presented as manipulative and pragmatic action; on the other hand it is doing what is right from the point of view of belief. We cannot have it both ways unless the whole notion of manipulation is redefined such that it does not always involve intentionality. But intentionality is at the core of the action theorists conception of individuality.

Similar criticisms to those levelled at Boissevain can be, and indeed have been, made of F.G. Bailey (e.g. Silverman 1974) and of Frederick Barth (e.g. Asad 1979). Bailey looks at core and periphery in terms of a typology of forms of 'encapsulation' by dominant structures of local ones (Bailey 1969: 146-151). However, the typology adds nothing to the understanding of specific historical and structural situations and by no means exhausts the possibilities of interrelation between core and periphery. The opposition between structures that he puts forward is overly dualistic and mechanical. Middlemen appear once again as the only possible means of 'bridging the gaps' (ibid : 167)

Barth's view is more complicated and it would be inappropriate here to go into the details of his conception of social organisation since it does not have a direct bearing on the issue of core and periphery. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the notion of

the self-interested choice-making individual is central to his standpoint. Indeed Asad has convincingly argued that Barth imposes a western market model (ultimately derived from the Hobbesian tradition) on the subjects of his analysis:

> ...the 'individualism' of highland New guinea societies cannot be assimilated ... to the bourgeois 'individualism' of the middle classes in advanced capitalist society.
> (Asad, T. 1979: 618-9)

Barth objected to the functionalist view which simply described the regularities of social relations as being derived from obedience to moral injunctions and did not "depict any intervening social process between the moral injunction and the pattern" (Barth 1981: 35). Yet his transactionalist solution to this problem does not escape from the opposition between society and the individual. His notion of 'value' relates solely to what individuals seek to maximise and categorically excludes ideas of rightness and morality (ibid: 91-2). In my view however, ideas of rightness and morality are not external injunctions imposed on unsuspecting and otherwise 'free' individuals. Instead they are *internalised* and so in social action it is not merely the constraints that are moral, but the choices themselves (to a greater or lesser extent). This does not mean that everyone abides by the moral ideal all the time but it *does* mean that their actions are not circumscribed by any necessary self-interest ethic.

Overall, as Abner Cohen puts it

> the microscope [of action theory] ... is so powerful in disclosing the details of face-to-face political interaction, that it is powerless, or out of focus, to reflect the wider structural features of society.
> (Cohen, A. 1969: 224)

In fact the micro-level model is so heavily theorised that the action theorists achieve exactly the opposite of what they set out to achieve: their models become quite detached from the reality they are trying to explain.

It can be seen that 'action theory' in anthropology did not provide an adequate framework for the analysis of core-periphery relations. It recognised an important failing of the functionalists, namely that societies were not (or were no longer) the isolated and static entities that it had been assumed. However, in getting to grips with this and in finding new ways of describing and interpreting social change, the action theorists chose to concentrate on getting rid of staticity rather than isolation. As a result the potentially fruitful study of community-nation relations contained in embryo in Pitt-River's *People of the Sierra* was not fully developed.

In focussing on the interpersonal level action theory failed to grasp the importance of important structural and historical relationships and forces which go beyond the micro-level but yet affect it. Inasmuch as relations between 'micro' and 'macro' levels were considered, they too were seen at the interpersonal level. Particular types of individual were generated by 'gaps in communication' between levels and through this type of relation the gaps were 'mediated' or 'bridged'. The 'points of intersection' tended to be politicians, officials, members of the local elite, representatives of the seemingly amorphous and unknown authorities. This produced an unwarranted emphasis on the bureaucratic and political side of the relationship as well as leaving out the myriad ways at both structural and interpersonal level, in which local communities were linked to the 'outside world'.

It is now necessary to turn to studies which did not ignore the 'macro' level but rather took it as their starting point.

3.2.4. Making Use of Dependency Theory

With action theory consideration of the relationship between core and periphery was just one minor aspect of a more general perspective on the nature of interpersonal relations. However, at the same time as this approach was developing, there emerged in the social sciences a body of literature in which the core-periphery relationship was *central*. This was known as 'dependency theory' and it was a largely Marxist-inspired critique of the sociology of development.

Development Theory is in many ways diametrically opposed to the close interpersonal focus of action theory, looking instead at broad global relationships and macro-structures. Generally speaking it has been concerned with the countries of the Third World, although a few scholars have seen fit to adapt its insights to a European context (e.g. Schneider and Schneider 1976; Wade, R. 1979; Hudson and Lewis 1985; The Sussex Institute of Development Studies; SERG 1981). Overall, few anthropologists have attempted to incorporate a dependency approach into their analyses.

There were many different strands to dependency theory. However, its initial aim was to break decisively from the unilinear schemas of the 'modernisation theorists' (e.g. Rostow; Smelser; Lerner; Eisenstadt; Parsons) who assumed that with time "and the right medicine" (Alavi and Shanin 1982: 2) the countries of the Third World would follow the road taken by Europe and North America and arrive at the state of 'development'.

Rostow's study. for example, of the *Stages of Economic Growth* (1968), takes the British transition from traditional to modern as the model for the development of every nation.

The development theorists drew up league tables of economic and demographic indicators to show this process. However, it became apparent in many places that the development 'gap' was widening. As soon as it became obvious that these underdeveloped countries were not following the same path, the "blind optimism" (Bernstein 1979: 96) of the development theorists turned to "moral censure" (ibid) and the absence of the transition to self-sustained growth was attributed to people's own entrenched and backward beliefs and practices. This view then provided the legitimation for all kinds of interference and intervention in the Third World: population control; 'development' schemes; high technology solutions to problems of agriculture etc.

Against this background, and with particular reference to Latin America, an alternative view emerged which explained the 'development gap' in very different terms: far from being the result of 'cultural lag' or of the backward mentality of the people, the gap was a function of the exploitative nature and profit-oriented logic of the world capitalist economy which actively 'underdeveloped' the Third World in the process of its own development. Development and underdevelopment were two sides of the same coin.

There is thus a shift from a dualistic view of core and periphery where each has its own internal developmental logic, to a structural view in which the essential aspect is the dynamic relation between core and periphery: As Palma puts it:

> The core of these analyses is the study of individual Latin American societies through the concrete forms of articulation between 'external factors' (the general determinants of the capitalist system) and 'internal factors' (the specific determinants of each of these societies)
>
> (Palma 1978: 886)

The most voluble and polemical proponent of dependency theory was A.G. Frank, and it is he who is generally credited with having made the decisive break form modernisation theory. However, it is also generally accepted that Frank's own formulation, highlights many of the problems of dependency theory.

According to Frank, the peripheral areas of the world have been incorporated into the global economy since the initial colonial expansion of capitalism in the 16th Century. Consequently all these peripheral systems were by virtue of this incorporation, *capitalist*. This single world capitalist system functions through the draining of surpluses created at each link in a chain of dependency relations from the underdeveloped areas or

'satellites', to the developed area or 'metropole'. Within this structural relationship, underdevelopment is inevitable, capitalist development impossible: the only solution for 'satellite' countries is to 'disengage' from the system and strive towards socialist revolution. (e.g. Frank, A.G. 1969)

A similar approach is that adopted by Wallerstein. For him, the world capitalist system is the only social system in existence. All the autonomous mini-systems that once existed have been penetrated by capitalism (Wallerstein 1975: 31). The essential feature of this global economy "is production for sale in the market in which the object is to realise the maximum profit" (ibid: 37). In producing for the market, the countries of the Third World are subjected to this all-encompassing system and thus become capitalist.

As has been pointed out by many critics, these approaches have many problems. They do establish clearly that from an early stage there have been links between Latin American societies and a wider global economy, and that these links have *not* led necessarily to capitalist development. However, in insisting on the opposite formula - that development of the core is proportional to the underdevelopment of the periphery - both authors fail to escape from the deterministic framework they seek to criticise and

> construct a mechanico-formal model which is no more than a set of equations of general equilibrium (static and unhistorical)
> (Palma op cit: 900)

The mechanistic and indeed economistic nature of this model is also evident in the notion of the draining of surplus from satellite to metropole - a process which goes on merely through production for the market.

Internal structures are thus seen to be entirely determined by external ones. They have no dynamic of their own but rather are simply puppets whose strings are pulled by a system the logic of which is to maximise profit at the metropolis.

In addition, both Frank and Wallerstein were seen to be stretching the meaning of capitalism beyond all recognition such that it seemed to signify little more than 'exploitation'. Their critics have shown that while capitalism involves production for profit in the market, this does not provide sufficient criteria for its definition and certainly not for a *marxist* definition (Laclau 1977: 46). The response of these authors to such criticisms (Wallerstein claims that Frank follows the "spirit of Marx, if not the letter" [Wallerstein 1982: 33]) is indicative of their emotive approach. As O'Brien points out, rather than attempting to analyse the specific nature of the relationship between

developed and underdeveloped systems, they rely "on an image of exploitation (a path leading form the Bolivian peasant to the rich New York capitalist)" (O'Brien 1975: 27).

What then is the usefulness of the dependency approach to the study of core and periphery in the context of South Italy? Can it shed light on the study of a single community's relation to the wider system?

The principal value of dependency theory is its recognition of the process whereby 'peripheries' are increasingly incorporated into an international system; and its recognition of the power differential involved in this process: the relationship brought about by the integration of core and periphery is an asymmetric one and therefore, "the options which lie open to [the periphery] are limited by the development of the system at the centre" (Palma op cit.: 909)

However, any attempt to 'apply' this theory by formally defining the precise nature of the relationship in abstract terms and then using this formal definition to elucidate the specific dynamics of particular historical contexts, will inevitably lead to misrepresentation and distortion. What people do, what happens to real institutions and social forms in real situations will merely become a knee-jerk reaction to the logic of capitalist development. The idea that the dynamic between local and external forces in the Italian context can be summed up by the notion of the draining of surplus from South to North along a chain of metropole-satellite relations, is absurd.

Thus, dependency theory provides us with a broad framework within which to understand core-periphery relations, but fails to provide any means of understanding the dynamics of these relations in a specific context.

A further limitation of the approach is that dependency is almost always defined in *economic* terms. The importance of this level of analysis, particularly in the Third World context where economic well-being is the most obvious and pressing problem, cannot be denied. However, to begin and end with the economic level would, in my opinion be wrong. Often the ideological or cultural level is ignored or regarded as epiphenomenal - perhaps partly as reaction to those theories which regarded local ideologies as obstacles to the 'correct' course of development.

In fact the idea of a 'correct' course of development is not entirely lacking in the work of much of the dependency school and in my view indicates their failure to escape from the unilinear model that they are trying to supersede. This is evident, for example, in the distinction sometimes made between 'growth' and 'development' where the former

indicates continued dependency, inequality and exploitation, while the latter, autonomy. However, this ethical distinction, which is intended to criticise the negative aspects of capitalist development on the periphery, still assumes that there is an ideal process by which development can take place. Indeed, often, the criteria for defining this ideal process are those which are taken to define the nature of development at the core (autonomy, self-sustained growth etc.). Thus once again, the core emerges as the 'realised ideal' and we are stuck again in the classificatory dichotomies described in the first section.

Having made these broad criticisms, it is now necessary to look at the way in which dependency theory has been applied in the Mediterranean context.

3.2.6. Core and Periphery - Another Perspective on Sicily.

As made clear above, such studies are few in anthropology and it is usually necessary to turn to other disciplines for the use of a dependency approach. In this section however, we will look at two anthropological studies of Sicily. The first is that set out tentatively by Schneider, Schneider and Hansen (1972) and then elaborated in a book by the Schneiders called *Culture and political economy in Western Sicily* (1976). It is the authors' explicit aim to understand core-periphery relations in Sicily in terms of Wallerstein's 'World Systems Theory'. The second is Blok's historical study of the Sicilian *mafia*. This study does not make use of a 'dependency' model, taking instead as its inspiration, the configurational approach of Norbert Elias. At the same time it is a broad-based structural approach and important differences and similarities emerge between the two studies that shed light on the development of my argument.

Even in the preface to their book, the Schneiders broaden the terms in which local communities in the South should be seen:

> our initial intent was to examine the structures through which peasant communities are articulated with the nation-state. Yet we soon discovered the importance of labour migration, and the ways in which it connected our field site not only to the state, but to an international labour market as well.
>
> (Schneider and Schneider 1976: x)

They try to show that the 'traditional' codes of local society (honour, friendship and cunning (*furbizia*)) are "not simply residua of a 'traditional' preindustrial past" but "were instruments of adaptation" to external colonial and neo-colonial forces which have had an overwhelming effect on the area not only recently but for centuries (ibid: 2). Hence, they say, Sicily's culture is a *consequence* not cause of underdevelopment.

The local system is characterised in terms of 'broker capitalism'. The 'backbone' of this system was a class of rural entrepreneurs who emerged in the 16th and 17th Centuries during the years of Spanish domination. Sicily was the major exporter of wheat to the cities of mainland Italy and Spain. However, production was organised in a particular way. The crown had little control over local barons; state bureaucracy was feeble; communication links were poor; there was little security in the countryside. In this situation neither foreign merchants nor absentee landlords living in Palermo were in a position to organise and control the actual production and distribution of wheat. Instead this was done by the estate managers on *masserie* - the social and administrative headquarters of large feudal estates. It was these estate managers who emerged as the rural entrepreneurs or 'broker capitalists'. Their most significant asset was a wide network of contacts.

In the 19th Century, their conservatism in the face of crop specialisation by other entrepreneurs, had nothing to do with 'tradition' but was rather a matter of their strategic and therefore closely guarded position in the economy. They could "promote or obstruct change within the parameters set by the world system" (ibid: 11).

In successive periods brokers have managed to maintain their position through the control of important linkages between the local community and wider structures. Thus in the newly-formed Italian state in the late 19th Century, local bosses became *grandi elettori* for deputies in parliament, providing them with votes on the condition that the interests of themselves and their *amici* were protected. According to the Schneiders, this created a 'verticalisation' of society with strong patron-client ties leading to conflict within, rather than between classes and hence the elaboration and perpetuation of the honour code. By the same token, communities were linked separately to the state rather than to each other.

Fascism brought the decline of local bosses but in subsequent years, various forms of broker emerged again and favours continued to be exchanged for votes. With recent changes brought about by emigration, tourism, the more decisive penetration of the welfare state and involvement in wider markets for consumption, particularly of northern products, the conditions of existence of brokers have been reproduced. (ibid: 203-26)

In each period then, Sicily has been subject to the vissicitudes of the core - whether it is the Spanish Empire or western neo-colonial markets. Thus, brokers were in a dependent position, though it was a powerful one.

It is in this context that the 'cultural codes' singled out by the Schneiders must be understood: friendship to cement relationships and ensure trust, honour as a means of ranking families in an atmosphere of intense rivalry and *furbizia*, or cunning, for shrewd manipulation in a situation of uncertainty which made adaptability paramount(ibid: 81ff).

The Schneiders show that such codes were equally necessary when their fieldwork was carried out in the 1960's. Uncertainty continued to characterise the social and economic environment and so 'friends of friends' continued to be essential to people's strategies for survival. To submit to the cultural codes of the present 'core' - described by the authors as being based upon an ideology of merit, impartiality, the liberation of individuals from their familial and friendship obligations, and the self-discipline of the common good and long-term investment - would be to lose the little remaining manoeuvrability they have (ibid: 234-5).

What then is the usefulness of this approach for my own study of a southern Italian town in the 1980's? To begin with, the Schneiders succeed in adding an historical element to their study: the individualism and entrepreneurship found in Sicily in the 1960's is attributed to specific historical conditions rather than being seen as the product of some universalised 'common sense' human propensity to manipulate.

Secondly, the category of individuals who are seen to link national and local levels are set within the context of changing social relations between all classes *and* within the context of the changing position of the area as a whole in relation to the core. this is a long way from the identification of an abstract structural position ('the gap') mediated by an abstract type of individual ('the broker'). As a whole then, their study illustrates the advantages of the dependency approach.

However, notwithstanding these advantages, its usefulness for my purposes is limited. The principal reason for this is that the vast historical scope of the book, spanning at least four centuries, makes the study somewhat schematic and generalisations tend to be sweeping. Thus, while their hypothesis that the cultural codes developed as a response to an insecure and dependent position in the world economy is a convincing one, it is ultimately speculative. Having been given a description of present-day banquets which ritually reinforce the ideology of friendship, the reader is asked to *imagine* the same thing happening in the past (ibid: 107). Having described the present-day honour code they make *guesses* about its possible origin in certain "features of the ancient empires" (ibid: 95). And so it goes on.

It seems to me that in an attempt to avoid the biases of functionalism and modernisation theory, the authors have reproduced the same kind of schematisms of the dependency approach: all aspects of local culture *must* be explained by reference to the world economic system. The possibility that in many ways communities *were* effectively isolated is not considered and, as Graziano puts it in a review, "the two poles of the book are Sicily and the World, and insufficient attention is paid to the national dimension" (Graziano, L. 1979: 248).

In addition, as with dependency theory, the focus of the study is almost entirely economic. This applies as much to their definition of underdevelopment ("to overcome underdevelopment means to cease exchanging labour and primary products at a loss, in return for other people's manufactures" (Schneider, Schneider & Hansen 1972: 329), as it does to their explanation of the cultural codes (defence mechanisms to alleviate the economic expropriations of a dominant system). The relation between economy and culture is thus somewhat one-way with the external system imposing the former and the local system responding with the latter.

I would suggest however, that the relationship between core and periphery can also be usefully studied at the level of culture. In other words in terms of the complex of ideas, images and representations involved in the relation between local society and the core. This means looking not just at local cultural codes, nor at their relation to a wider economy, but also at their relation to the 'cultural codes' of the core. Essential to the dynamic between core and periphery at this level is the notion of 'backwardness' which has, in my view, been instrumental in perpetuating the subordinate position of southern Italy vis-a-vis the North. It is indeed the Schneiders' primary intention to undermine this notion by locating it not in the minds of Sicilians but in the economic conditions in which Sicilian society has developed. However, it seems to me that they have not fully appreciated the extent to which the idea of backwardness is entrenched, not only in the analyses of social scientists (like Banfield and those criticised by Frank) but also in popular and intellectual images of southern Italy at least since Unification *and* in the very categories we and they, the Schneiders, use to classify societies.

It is therefore necessary not only to question the 'cause' of backwardness (the people or the system) but also to inquire into the very category 'backward' itself, as applied to particular groups of people since it has become apparent that this category and the classification of which it is a part, are themselves instruments in the process by which the condition is perpetuated.

Let us now turn to Blok's study of the mafia in Sicily. Although he does not make use of the dependency model for his analysis, Blok recognises at the outset that in order to understand the specific nature of the mafia he must have as his primary concern, the relationship between the village he studied and the larger society in which it is contained (Blok 1974: 6). In opposition to the Schneiders who look at mafiosi as businessmen, Blok sees them as political operators who are powerful enough to create their own state within a state, due to the failure of the central authority to monopolise the use, or threat of physical violence.

He describes how "on the one hand, *mafiosi* disregard formal law and are able to withstand the impact of the legal and government apparatus" (ibid). In this sense they set themselves in opposition to that apparatus. On the other hand however, they do so by acting "in connivance with formal authority and validate their control through the covert and pragmatic relationship with those who hold formal office" (ibid).

From here he goes on to look at mafia in terms of the action theorists' conception of the broker maintaining his position by maintaining the tension between the two levels rather than by resolving their differences (ibid: 9). However, there are important differences between this approach and that of the action theorists.

Firstly it is *historical*, setting the analysis in the context of significant structural changes in local and national socio-political organisation over a particular period of time. And secondly, Blok recognises that although he is concentrating on one particular category of person, its emergence was contingent upon changing relationships involving the village and its territory, the 'outside world', as well as, more specifically, other social groups and categories including landlord and peasant, professional, civil servant and politician. The study of the 'configuration' formed by all of these relationships is thus a long way from the ahistorical and abstract inquiries of the action theorists.

However, for the purposes of my study this approach again has its limitations. To begin with it is largely confined to the historical period from 1860 until the aftermath of the two World Wars. Treatment of the most recent period (i.e. since the 1950's) is, as Gribaudi puts it *"alquanto marginale"* - "rather marginal" (Gribaudi, G. 1980: 186). Thus despite what has been said, it does tend to concentrate heavily on the apparently concrete 'pivotal role' - that of the political power broker - as characteristic of the relationship between state and local society. As a result there is little scope for the possibility that through history such roles will be transformed; and also that the very nature of the relationship between levels will itself be changed such that it is no longer sufficient to

characterise it in terms of the linking functions of a particular category of individual. This viewpoint will be discussed further below.

3.2.7. Core and Periphery in Italian Sociology and Economics

As mentioned, one of the major problems of the Schneiders' approach was that the poles of analysis were Sicily and the World, causing the national level to be neglected. Moreover, both this study and that of Blok were seen to have paid insufficient attention to the complexity of changes that have occurred in southern Italy since World War II. A better perspective in these respects is contained in the work of sociologists and economists in Italy itself where a vast body of literature can be found looking precisely (but not only) at the post war problems of the South in national terms. Significantly, a dominant branch of this literature is either Marxist inspired or draws on the dependency approach discussed above.

Like the Latin American dependency theorists, the proponents in Italy of this view sought to break from the 'modernisation' approach which, as we will see in subsequent chapters, was the explicit theoretical and 'expert' rationale for state policy in the South in the post war years. The problems of the south were seen to be less a consequence of the obstinacy of southern 'traditionalism' than an outcome of the unequal and dependent development of the region in relation to the North: "backwardness is a phenomenon produced by development itself" (Donolo in Pinto 1981: 126).

It would be wrong to rehearse in detail here the content of these studies since ultimately their usefulness is limited in relation to my approach. The main point I wish to make however, is that like the theories from which they derive their approach, these Italian studies have a tendency to be economistic and mechanistic. They tend to represent peripheral social forms as being entirely produced by external determining forces. Thus in the strategy of capitalist development, the unemployed masses of the South serve as an "industrial reserve army" for northern industry (e.g. ibid: 132-6) while state intervention is geared solely towards the containment of social conflicts.

In addition these studies are largely quantitative. Questions are framed and conclusions drawn by the shuffling of national official statistics. If they are able to demonstrate in economic terms that there had been a net flow of capital from South to North or that per capita resources spent on northerners were a greater drain on the national purse than southern subsidies, then the point has been made (e.g. Del Monte & Giannola 1978: Ch.1; Marelli, L. (ed) 1972; Graziano, A. & Pugliese, E. 1979; Boccella, N.M. 1982).

Such observations are of course important and it is in a sense unreasonable to expect an economist to produce anything other than an economic account of core-periphery relations. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that my own approach to core and periphery was developed to an extent in opposition to the emphases of Italian sociology.

3.2.8. "Underdeveloped Europe"

Another group of studies which draw on the insights of dependency theory and make use of concepts of under- and uneven development, are those produced by the Sussex Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and by a group of researchers associated with *Critique of Anthropology* - the Southern Europe Research Group (SERG).

This latter group again take a 'World systems' approach which demands that any local study be historically situated. They criticise Wallerstein for his mechanistic approach to social processes and for his failure to "integrate ideology except as epiphenomenal within his concept of the world system" (SERG 1981: 58). However, despite their concern with the level of ideology, when it comes to setting out a programme geared towards understanding the nature of the integration of southern Europe into advanced capitalism at the local level, the questions to be asked are largely economic and quantitative:

> How do local areas relate to the national boom [i.e. the recent rapid growth in the economies of southern Europe]? In terms of the inflow and outflow of capital, to what extent does capital go out of the region and where is it going? To what extent does it come into the area and where is it going? What are the forms that this flow of capital takes (wages, consumption, investment etc.)?
> (ibid: 62)

Once again then, the scope for dealing with the ideological/cultural level is greatly reduced.

The research of the IDS culminated in 1979 in a volume of essays entitled *Underdeveloped Europe* together with a collection of essays from a conference at the University of Durham called *Uneven Development in Southern Europe* (1985). Again however, the emphasis is macro-economic with the relations between core and periphery being looked at in terms of of standard economic and demographic indicators rather than at the social and cultural forms that these broad economic changes assume in specific local contexts. We are given figures for income per capita, the productivity of regions, inflows and outflows of migrants and tourists, industrial investment, the extent of infrastructure

(total length of roads, number of telephones etc.); yet very little understanding of the local manifestations of these.

3.2.9. The Micro-Organisation of Backwardness

At the start of this review of the literature on approaches to core and periphery in southern Europe, I quoted from an article by Bodemann who stated that dependency theory had generally failed to show that local society had been affected by global processes. Let us now turn to Bodemann's own approach to the problem in a study of the "micro-organisation of backwardness" in a Sardinian village called Telemula.

Bodemann takes for granted that 'backwardness' is a condition created by the process of underdevelopment. Thus, Telemula has been 'made' peripheral by the penetration of capitalism and the progressive integration of the area into the Italian nation state. However, he rejects the economistic aspects of dependency theory and tries to show that market mechanisms are not sufficient in order to complete this penetration. Rather, they must be backed up by the political force of the state (in this case involving physical force) *and* by means of alliances with local elites who become minor partners in the process of integration (Bodemann, Y. 1979: 356). He provides a detailed analysis of how the formation of these alliances, through time, alters the local social structure, particularly with respect to kinship.

He thus tackles head on, the problem of how external forces manifest themselves locally. However, in my view, there are several problems with his argument which divert attention from important aspects of core-periphery relations.

Foremost among these problems is that, as with most of those considered so far, he virtually ignores the realm of ideology. Thus while he recognises, following Rosa Luxemburg, that the use of political power is essential to the penetration of capitalism, he does not consider the possibility that the ideology of the core (e.g. of consumerism, lifestyles etc.) could assist this process and thus play a part in the reproduction of the South's peripheral position

This can be seen in his definition of what constitutes peripheral status and later in his ingenious attempts to engage in interventive research by suggesting means by which Telemula could resist further 'peripherisation'. Thus:

> ... a community shall be considered peripheral if the quality and number of its successful initiatives towards higher level political units ... is significantly outweighed by successful initiatives on the part of the higher level units. Successful initiatives shall mean actions and relationships which are in the direct interest of the unit in question.
>
> (ibid: 61)

The question of who defines what constitutes 'the interests' of 'units' is not addressed in this very formal definition of 'peripherality' and therefore what constitutes a 'successful initiative' is unclear also.

The contradictions in this view emerge more clearly when we consider the author's proposals for the creation of a 'community advocate' who would liaise between the community and the 'outside world' in such a way that would help them to help themselves (ibid: 374). Being independent of the the traditional channels of kin and clientele, this advocate could break the resource monopoly of the local elite, allow the emergence of political parties and interest groups on economic lines and thus give the populace genuine political strength (ibid: 377).

The advocate could find markets for local crafts and assist in the development of tourism by reorganising traditional festivals so that the community could "present itself, its various products and its culture to the outside world" (ibid: 374). He even suggests guided tours in the mountains, a folkloristic museum in an old-style house and "shepherds in traditional shepherd huts in the mountains could host groups of tourists for a rustic meal" (ibid).

These are of course the speculations of an anthropologist concerned to see an end to the injustices perpetrated by capitalism on Sardinia. Yet they are speculations which reveal important assumptions about what constitutes 'peripherality' and its amelioration. Could there be any better way to *assist* the further penetration of capitalism into the Sardinian periphery than to turn one of the only things people have left of their own - their cultural identity - into a commodity to be consumed by atavistic tourists from the Italian mainland and western Europe? In what sense is a festival 'traditional' if it is divested of the kin and clientele relations which it previously involved and is instead *marketed;* made to conform to an image grounded more in the 'core' society of the tourists than in local culture itself? What meaning could such an event have

other than to reassure the tourists that there are pockets of 'tradition' in the world in which they can for a time vicariously participate?

Bodemann even suggests that towns should be cleaned up in order to make them more "aesthetic" (ibid: 376). Concern then is with a pristine 'image' to be presented devoid of all the messiness and the struggles of everyday life. 'Tradition' is removed from the local arena in which it was previously defined and incorporated into a wider 'core' cultural arena. Consequently the meanings associated with it are appropriated and transformed.

I have lingered on this example for two reasons. Firstly because it demonstrates in my opinion, the failure of anthropologists and others looking at core-periphery relations to consider the importance of ideology, of images and representations as effective forces *in themselves*, in the reproduction of these relations. Secondly, Bodemann's suggestions are not wholly speculative, but are based on the existence, in communities like Telemula and indeed Grottaminarda of certain groups and individuals who *do* seek to reorganise and revive traditional festivals in this way. There is a need to understand the motivations of these people and their ideas and assumptions about what constitutes 'backwardness' and/or 'modernity'. In my view their actions are not expressions of autonomy or tradition but, paradoxically, acts of *dissociation* from tradition; acts in which the integration of such communities into the core is manifested further - but in this case at a cultural level.

These points will become clearer as the evidence from Grottaminarda is presented. At this point it is necessary to explain in more detail the approach that I wish to take in describing and interpreting the nature of the relationship between a single southern Italian community and the national and supranational culture into which it is integrated.

4. An Approach to Core and Periphery - II

4.1. Introduction

What then are the major points to draw from this roundabout survey of approaches to 'core' and 'periphery'? The initial question that was put was: what is the best way of describing the nature of the relationship between Grottaminarda and the 'core' culture into which it is integrated ?

In providing the means to answer this question none of the preceding approaches have been considered as entirely appropriate. In many ways, the criticism of studies for not focussing on aspects on which it was never their intention to focus seems pointless. However, the aim of the preceding criticism has not been to dismiss, but rather to suggest a shift of emphasis in an area of study (core-periphery relations) which, at least in anthropology, has reached something of an impasse in recent years. It has been recognised that there is more need for studies which recognise the position of communities within wider, more encompassing structures, especially in the European context, and yet few such studies have emerged.

In the patronage studies the core-periphery relationship was secondary to the analysis of the nature of patronage itself, defined as an interpersonal relationship. Insomuch as links with wider, national levels were considered they were looked at in terms of this same interpersonal level (which was also the viewpoint of the informant) in which the 'outside world' was the world of 'officialdom' and the impersonal (and moreover, unspecified) 'State'. Moreover, as a result of this focus on 'officialdom', discussion of the relation of community to nation were restricted to the political arena. Consequently also, the potentially fruitful approach of Pitt-Rivers in which community and State were related in terms of the tension between two sets of values which affect all the relationships in which individuals are involved, was not pursued. Finally, there was an overemphasis on one particular category of individual who was paradigmatic of the self-seeking, manipulative individual central to the action-centred approach, the mediator or broker.

With 'dependency theory' and the approaches deriving from it we go to the opposite extreme and interpersonal relations disappear in the mechanisms of a system. Thus while these approaches were seen to break from the dualism of the 'modernisation' theorists, to establish a relationship between the immiseration of the periphery and the enrichment of the core and to reinstate the 'importance of history' in attempting to

formalise the dynamics of this relationship and 'apply' this formal theory to real situations they succeeded only in negating history, simplifying the said dynamics and representing the real actions of individuals at a local level as a knee-jerk response to the logic of capitalism. As well as this mechanism/economism, the approaches considered under this heading tended to look solely at the economic arena paying only scant attention to the realm of ideology and representation.

4.2 Integration, Representations, Identity.

What then does this 'shift of emphasis' entail? As we have seen above, up until now consideration of the forces that are brought to bear on local communities through the process of integration, has always concentrated on the economic and political arena. Consequently when it comes to interpreting local cultural responses, these are generally seen to be responses to an economy or to an impersonal administrative system or a political system or at best to the values embodied in a legal system. Moreover there always seems to be a clash or tension between the two, rather than, for example, *acceptance* of the alternative values on offer. This is also the case with the Schneiders account where the 'alternative cultural codes' of the capitalist system (i.e. those of the Protestant Ethic, individualism, an ideology of merit etc.) are for Sicilians not an alternative at all, but a categorically unobtainable and, moreover, abhorrent set of values (Schneider & Schneider *op cit*: 239-235). However this is a much too simplistic interpretation and neglects the fact that the responses of those on the periphery to integration are also responses to the *culture* into which they are being integrated. Thus, as well as the economic and political forces that impinge upon the local level there is also an ideological force.

This then is to return to the Pitt-Rivers analysis of the community-nation relationship as the interrelation between two sets of values which affect all the relationships in which individuals are involved. It does not however mean a return to functionalism. Rather it means a return to the ideological arena that was considered by Pitt-Rivers - without however making any immediate *a priori* assumptions about the way in which the local and supralocal interrelate on this level.

In order to begin developing this approach let us go back to Silverman's 1965 article on community-nation relations which has only been mentioned briefly so far. In my view this article provides an extremely perceptive account of how to approach core-periphery relations in an historically informed way and it is an account which was not sufficiently heeded by her contemporaries.

The article is a study of the changing links between Colleverde, a town in central Italy, and the larger society in which it is contained. In particular it looks at the changing nature of patronage and of the function of 'mediation' as the nature of the links between levels have changed. In her introduction she states:

> The concept of the mediator proved to be most pertinent for understanding the relationship of the community to the larger society *during a particular period* . However it was found that if this relationship is followed over time, not only are there always changes with regard to the groups which perform mediation functions ... there are fundamental changes in the structuring of links between community and nation.
>
> (Silverman 1965:172-3. italics mine)

In this single introductory statement it seems to me that Silverman has summed up many of the problems of action theory and dependency theory. Thus the concept of the 'mediator' refers not to an abstract 'type' of individual who bridges formally-defined 'gaps'. Rather it is a category which can be useful in understanding the relationship between core and periphery *in a particular period.* Thus also, the structure of this relationship cannot be formalised as a theory but rather, in order to avoid representing social change as mechanical, it must be understood in terms of the historical conditions that change its nature.

With reference to mediators then it is necessary to consider not how the 'pivot' between local and national level might change, but rather to ask whether, with the passage of time, it can realistically be described as a 'pivot' any longer.

Silverman delineates three stages or periods in the history of Colleverde in which the structure of the relationship between community and nation has changed:

1. Pre-Unification Italy in which mediation with the outside world on behalf of clients was insignificant and the patron-client tie was, rather, a relationship embedded in the local-level relations between landlord and peasant.

2. Post-Unification Italy until 1945 in which the encroachment of the nation-state in the form of bureaucracy, communication links, military service, new kinds of employment etc., involved Colleverde more fully in relationships beyond the community level. This is the period in which the position of the patron can be described as 'pivotal'; in which clients turned to patrons not only for the assistance and resources the latter had 'always' provided as landlords but also to help deal with the new demands of the outside world (legal problems, the filling in of

forms, obtaining pensions etc.). The patrons formed a group of local *signori* consisting mainly of landlords some of whom also held professional positions together with non-landed members of the professional classes. The patronage roles of these *signori* was undifferentiated, "Each ... being for his clients at once the economic, political, social and ideological link to the larger society" (Silverman 1965: 181) and "As a group , the patrons controlled virtually all the critical junctures between the local and national systems." (ibid).

3. In the third period, from 1945 to the 'present' (i.e. the early 1960's), this monopoly of the political links between levels has been continually eroded with the 'patron group' declining as a group and people's participation in the national system becoming to an increasing extent unmediated. The functions of the patron-group have been taken over by the Welfare State, by political parties, by unions and other interest groups. This has been facilitated through increased ease of transport, the growth of educational opportunities for all and the consequent increase in literacy, as well as involvement in the 'outside world' via the media. Indirect links remain but are not the monopoly of a single group nor does each individual patron act as his clients advocate in all social spheres. Rather there are "separate ties for each functionally distinct aspect of the interaction between local and national systems" (ibid: 187). Moreover, as well as the increased diversity of links "a large proportion of the indirect links are structurally horizontal, relating persons of equivalent rank and social category" (ibid).

It can be seen then, in the shift from stage 2-3 (i.e.since 1945) that

> The patrons of Colleverde, the traditional mediators between the local and the national system have been pushed out of the strategic link positions. However they have not been simply replaced by other emerging groups. Rather, it may be said that there has been change in the nature of the links between community and nation (ibid: 183)

It seem to me that a lack of appreciation of such historical shifts - which *change the terms in which the relationship must be seen* - has led to the present impasse in the study of core and periphery. It is precisely by looking at such changes in the nature of core-periphery relations that importance of representations, images and stereotypes emerges.

There are both similarities and differences to be found if I compare my own fieldwork with Silverman's study of Colleverde. However the value of this study is not a matter of the specifics of each stage that she identifies but rather that she offers a methodology, a way of looking at the history of a relationship which avoids the

polarisation and concretisation of the terms of the relationship. At each point in history at which significant structural change in the relationship can be identified, it is necessary to change the terms in which the relationship is seen. Thus while it may at one time have been appropriate to regard the interrelation of local and national levels in terms of economic and political relations, this is no longer merely a 'jural-political' one, nor one which only imposes an economy and thus 'exploits'. As well as these things it is a culture - it offers itself to people on the periphery as a worldview, a style of life, a set of images, symbols, representations and stereotypes.

The 'availability' of this culture has only become widespread at the local level in southern Italy since the 1960's and for this reason the shift in emphasis to the cultural/ideological level is also, partly, an historical shift. Yet, at the same time, it is in my view, an area of study that has been neglected in prior periods. Thus, despite the relatively recent spread of popular 'core' culture, the images and representations upon which it draws have had a formative influence on the South for years and are deeply entrenched in the history of the country as a whole. It is therefore necessary to trace the historical development of these images and representations in the South Italian context. This will be the purpose of Chapter 2.

The shift in emphasis being made then, is from putatively 'concrete' economic and political relationships to the arena in which images, stereotypes and representations are created and reproduced, packaged and appropriated, disseminated and transformed. This is not to deny the importance of economy and polity, but rather to assert the reality of representation in the reproduction of the relations between core and periphery.

The question that has to be asked next is: how do these representations manifest themselves on the periphery? In my view they are an everyday matter. They are presented to people in their everyday lives through the media and popular culture (e.g. fashion, television, literature, magazines etc.); through the market (in the goods people buy, sell and, consume); through education (e.g. in the acquisition of skills deemed to be appropriate for the future); through emigration (e.g. the lived experience of different lifestyles and of being set apart); and through State intervention (e.g. in the extension of welfare benefits, but also in things like industrialisation - the introduction of factories which not only have an economic impact but which embody, in the logic of their location, all the assumptions of the State towards the recipients).

The representations take two principal forms: on the one hand there are images of 'modern' lifestyles that the core seeks to promote and encourages people to adopt - in

other words the core's self-representation; on the other hand there are images of the periphery as perceived by the core. These tend to denigrate, ridicule or romanticise peripheral culture, regarding it as essentially 'backward'.

What we have then, is a classification which has developed and been reproduced through the history of a relationship. The classification (modern-backward) and the relationship (core-periphery) go together - it is very difficult to define the relationship other than in the terms designated by the classification. This does not mean however, that the basis of the classification need be accepted. 'Coreness' and 'peripherality' are not objective characteristics or innate qualities. Rather they are a matter of position within a relationship - a relationship that has been actively established through the struggles of different groups. The point about the representations that accompany this relationship is not simply that they describe but that in describing they also *prescribe* - "one judges at the same time as one names" (Barthes, R. 1973: 81). The act of representing is not a neutral act but always carries with it a judgement; and this judgement is especially effective when it is made from a position of power.

Having established the existence of this classification, made manifest in representations which are presented to people in their everyday lives, we have gone some of the way to answering the question of the nature of the relation between core and periphery in a general sense.

The next question to ask is, how do people on the periphery, and in particular in Grottaminarda, *deal* with this situation? What strategies do they employ, what choices do they make, how do they position themselves in their everyday relationships in order to attain, maintain or defend what they see as important?

The first point to note in this respect is that the odds are stacked against them: not only is the core, by definition, the dominant partner in the classification, it also controls the means by which the representations describing this relationship are reproduced. It is thus better placed to establish itself and the representations as legitimate, as neutral and in turn to reproduce that relationship.

Those on the periphery, for their part, should not be represented as simply passive receptors of this state of affairs, as is implied in the mechanistic theories of dependency and underdevelopment discussed above. At the same time, neither are they free to attach to these representations whatever meanings they choose. As Bourdieu points out in a criticism which applies neatly to the action theorists:

> Rejection of mechanistic theories in no way implies that, in accordance with another obligatory option, we should bestow on some creative free will, the free and wilful power to constitute, on the instant, the meaning of the situation by projecting the ends aiming at its transformation, and that we should reduce the objective intentions and constituted significations of actions and works to the conscious and deliberate intentions of their authors.
> (Bourdieu, 1977: 73)

Rather, it must be accepted that the representations are already inextricably entangled in people's everyday lives and are endowed with meanings which they are not entirely at liberty to manipulate. They cannot be ignored. Consequently people's predicament is much more realistically viewed as one in which they must struggle for position within the classification.

This viewpoint owes a great deal to Bourdieu's study of the relation between taste and class in France. In developing his approach to class, Bourdieu points out that the very categories and classifications used by social scientists to arrange the various classes into distinct strata based on 'objective' criteria like income, occupation, residence etc. themselves contribute to the production and reproduction of particular class relations:

> The social positions which present themselves to the observer as places juxtaposed in a static order of discrete compartments, raising the purely theoretical question of the limits between the groups who occupy them, are also strategic emplacements, fortresses to be defended and captured in a field of struggles
> (Bourdieu 1984: 244)

It is not enough then to describe classes according to a "punctual set of distributions of properties among individuals" (ibid: 245) since these "necessarily put into parentheses the struggle of which this distribution is the product" (ibid).

While this study refers specifically to class, we can nevertheless easily recognise its significance for the study of core-periphery relations. It enables us to show that the classification which through representation, distinguishes between core and periphery, 'modern' and 'backward', sophisticated and simple, is not neutral or given but has itself been established through struggle. It is through the strategies of acceptance or rejection of the legitimacy of the classification that relations between core and periphery are reproduced and transformed.

What we have to consider then, at the local level, is the way in which people strive or struggle for position within a classification which is not of their making but which, as a result of their incorporation into the wider system, is a part of their lives. What is at stake in this struggle, is their *identity* and the particular strategies that they

adopt will depend upon their existing position in the social structure and upon their particular life history. This does not mean returning to a mechanistic viewpoint but rather recognising that people's background will give them an internalised *sense of place* in everyday social relationships.

What I would like to show is that the principal criterion for assessment of an individual's or family's social position is their relationship to 'backwardness' and 'modernity' or '*civlità* '; the extent to which they consider themselves, and are considered by others, to be backward or modern, *arretrato* or *civile*. Moreover, the implication of this interpretation is that in making their assessments and in acting according to such assessments, local people are compelled to situate themselves within a classification which is not of their own making and in which they occupy at the outset a subordinate position.

In other words, the precariousness and dependency of the contemporary economy is also present at a cultural level; at the level of identity and sense of place. As a result people's ideas, values, actions are appropriated by the core, and interpreted in terms of the core classification. People cannot ascribe whatever meaning they choose to their actions or to the representations of modernity and backwardness with which they are presented. They must *find a place* within the classification defined by those representations. Whether they embrace or ignore, accept or resist they are responding in some way to this classification. And whichever options they choose, it will involve risk, difficulty, struggle, since, being in the most privileged position, the core has the privilege of representing itself as the most 'natural', legitimate option (cf. Bourdieu, P. 1984: 56). They can choose to ignore the dictates of modernity with the consequence that they are defined as backward. On the other hand in *embracing* modernity, there is no guarantee of acceptance and very possibly, as far as the modern world is concerned, this will simply point up their continued backwardness.

In some ways this approach is similar to that taken by Silverman (1975) in showing how social position is determined by closeness to, or distance from, an ideal *civile* lifestyle represented most clearly in practice by the local elite. However, she presents this as a specifically *local* ideology, which developed in the context of a town with a markedly urban identity. What I want to do, on the other hand, is to show that in the case of Grotta reference to *civlità* and *arretratezza* is less concerned with a local ideology than with the much wider core classification. The *content* of what constitutes *civlità* or *arretratezza* is determined not by Grottesi, nor even by the Grottesi elite, but rather by the

core. This then is to confirm Silverman's 'speculation' in Ch 8 of her book (which looks at Montecastello 'Ten years later' i.e. 1971) that:

> the reference points of value and status no longer reside in the community; the 'civilised' is now defined in terms of national models rather than the attributes of a local elite.
> (Silverman, S. 1975: 224)

In my view there need no longer be any speculation that this is the case and what I want to do in this thesis is show how this fact manifests itself in everyday life in the community. Given their somewhat more ignoble history as compared with the central Italian hill town of Montecastello, we will see that concern to be *civile* is generally less often to do with associating themselves with a well-defined modern lifestyle than with escaping from the image of backwardness.

4.3. Outline of Chapters

To this end the thesis is organised as follows: Chapters Two and Three respectively provide a general and local historical framework. The former outlines the process whereby South Italy has become integrated into a wider economic and cultural system. It focusses particularly on the development of the images and representations which have classified the South as 'backward' since Unification. Chapter Three traces the stages of Grottaminarda's integration into the wider system 'beyond the community'. This shows how the town experienced the overall process described in Chapter Two and how the relationship between core and periphery changed at each stage.

The next two chapters (Four and Five) provide a picture of the basic geographic, demographic and economic characteristics of the contemporary community. Chapter Four describes the geographical setting of the community at provincial levels as well as the infrastructural characteristics of the town. In addition it involves discussion of the terms used to define its location, showing how these seemingly basic, 'natural' categories are inextricably bound up with the *social* classification of the area as backward.

Chapter Five provides a detailed breakdown of the structure of the local economy focussing particularly on the way in which its precariousness has been reproduced in the contemporary period and combined with increased dependency on wider economic spheres.

The next four chapters (Six to Nine) are the ethnographic 'backbone' of the thesis. The purpose of each is to describe the way in which the core images of backwardness and modernity have become part of people's everyday relationships. Each

focusses on a particular set of relationships: the family and the life cycle; class and status; politics; and identity, and looks at the way in which people struggle for position in the core classification in the context of these relationships.

The penultimate chapter (Chapter Ten) is an attempt to characterise this struggle through an interpretation of a social drama which involved the town in a national television quiz programme. This event is presented as a mini-ideological 'battle' between core and periphery. Every aspect of the structure and content of the event is revealing of the nature of relations between the Grottesi and the wider economy and culture into which they are integrated - and of the way in which these relations are reproduced through images, representations and stereotypes.

Conclusions are presented in Chapter Eleven.

CHAPTER TWO

The Process of Integration in South Italy: the Historical Development of a Classification.

1. Introduction

> Typically historical information is included in the introduction along with a hundred years of population growth, a little rainfall and some notes on schists
>
> (Davis 1977: 244)

> One would have thought that the day was past when anthropologists set out to do village studies in Europe without thoroughly familiarising themselves with the historical background and relevant non-anthropological literature on their areas.
>
> (Silverman 1974: 114)

The above comments, the latter a criticism of Bailey's trilogy of publications (Bailey 1969, 1971a & 1971b), make it clear that a consideration of history is a requirement for any study in Mediterranean anthropology. This chapter is not however, simply a response to demands for 'more history'. Rather there are specific reasons, partly outlined in the previous chapter, for adopting an historical approach. It is in and through the historical process of integration that the relations between core and periphery come to be defined. Therefore, to ask about the integration of a small community in South Italy into a wider economic and cultural context, is to ask an historical question.

Crucial to the argument of this thesis is that there have been a series of historical shifts which have changed the nature of the relationship between core and periphery in the Italian context. The purpose of the present chapter is to trace the development of these historical shifts. In doing so, I will look particularly at the images and representations of the South that have accompanied the changes in the relationship. These images and representations have played an important part in the shaping of South Italy, at least since Unification, being instrumental in its classification as 'backward'. In the most recent period they have come to play a prominent part in people's everyday lives in Grottaminarda and towns like it. Before looking at the part they do play, it is necessary to look at how they have developed.

Clearly the starting point of such an enterprise cannot be an ideal state of isolation or 'non-integration'. As we have seen in Chapter One, to regard 'peripheral' communities as isolates is neither historically accurate nor theoretically tenable. Despite

the difficulties found above with the Schneiders' (1976) approach, they *do* show that the whole history of western Sicily - and indeed of South Italy - for the past 400 years at least, has been the history of its relations with a series of foreigners, invaders and conquerors. Therefore by following the example of Silverman we will attempt to isolate different historical stages or periods of significant structural change in the relationship between core and periphery in South Italy, and in the next chapter we will look at the way in which these changes have manifested themselves in the context of Grottaminarda.

In my view it is useful to distinguish three stages since Unification. These are as follows:

1. Unification (1861 - 1914).
2. Fascism and the two World Wars (1915 - 1945).
3. Post-war reconstruction until the present (1945 - 1985).

Stage three can be divided into two 'phases' - pre- and post-1960.

2. Stages of Integration.

2.1. Stage One: Unification.

2.1.1. The South Becomes Backward

The first historical stage or shift with which we are concerned is that brought about by the formal Unification of Italy in 1861. In and through this single event the image of the South as 'backward' comes into being. This is so in a somewhat obvious and trite sense: until the unified nation-state was created there was no 'South' as such to be labelled or categorised as 'backward'.

This is not to suggest *either* that similar negative images of the area did not exist prior to Unification *or* that the social and economic conditions of the area were not conditions of extreme poverty.

On the first of these points it can be shown that there were images of the area similar to the 'backward' label which came to characterise any discussion of southern Italy. The Schneiders, for example, in discussing the persistent imputation of cultural inferiority to Sicilians on the part of their foreign rulers, provide examples from the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries: for centuries foreigners and Sicilians alike have remarked on the 'mutual distrust' of the island people and on their "inability to take collective action" (Mack-Smith, D. quoted in Schneider & Schneider 1976: 227). Such

judgements permeated the records of the sixteenth century Spanish administration of Sicily and they were also pronounced in the observations of European visitors to the island in the eighteenth century (ibid).

On the second point, historical evidence is clear: the immiseration of the majority of the population was great. Despite the abolition of feudalism in 1806, the object of which had been to redistribute land and create a class of peasant small holders, most land in effect either remained in the hands of the ex-feudal lords or was appropriated by a new rising class of landed *'galantuomini'* or gentry. As Barbagallo puts it, this class;

> *apparivano meglio disposti ad imitare i comportamenti della nobiltà che ad assumere le moderne funzioni degli imprenditori capitalistici*
>
> appeared more disposed towards imitating the behaviour of the nobility than to assuming the modern functions of capitalist entrepreneurs
>
> (Barbagallo 1980: 7)

Thus, while there was a formal abolition of feudalism, the relationships between landlords and peasants did not change drastically except insofar as the position of the latter was weakened. Landlords were content to become *proprietari parassitari* (parasitic landowners), living as rentiers, not investing in the land and using their position of control in the local administration to usurp communal land and avoid taxation. The peasants, for their part were in no position to become owners even when the opportunity arose. Their ties with the land through different kinds of tenancy contract were increasingly precarious (c.f. Arlacchi, P. 1983: 135; Rossi-Doria, M. 1958: 48).

To make matters worse, the abolition of feudalism resulted in the peasants' loss of the *usi civici* - the traditional rights to graze their herd and collect wood on common land. In this way they lost the remaining manoeuvrability that feudalism - at least ideally - had offered and instead were left with a once-and-for-all redistribution in which land apportioned to them either quickly became fragmented in the next generation, or, was appropriated by a landlord through usurious interest rates on credit which the peasants were unable to meet. (cf Colclough 1969: 256).

From the above brief summary of pre-Unification conditions, which make no mention of the problems of population pressure, poor diet, lamentable sanitary conditions, it can be seen that the situation was one of extreme poverty. It could even be suggested, as is often suggested in the historiography of this period, that these were conditions of 'backwardness'. However, to do this would, in my view, be anachronistic. It would be to

ascribe to a situation a characteristic that only makes sense in the context of the particular relationship between north and south as different parts of a new nation and thus, to assume the existence of this relationship before it in fact came into being. This interpretation is in keeping with the idea that 'backwardness' is not an 'objective' condition identifiable by the existence of a particular mode of production (e.g.. one with feudal 'residuals') or by means of certain social and economic indicators. Rather, 'backwardness' is a matter of *position within a relationship* - a relationship which is asymmetrical and in which the dominant partner is largely responsible for the creation of the legitimate categories and definitions.

The classification of the 'south' as 'backward' cannot be separated from the purposes and interests of the north in furthering a particular form of economy and culture which it considered to be 'modern' or 'advanced'. Relations of production in the South are *named* backward, thus relegating them to the past and pointing the way to the 'advanced' future. Thus to call the south 'backward' is merely to say that it is not 'progressive' which in turn merely means 'the way the north is' or 'the way 'we' are'.

Whether this is based on observation of what happened in the north *or* on an abstract model of stages of development, it fails to escape from the notion of 'cultural lag' which, as Bourdieu points out, contains "an implicit evolutionism which enables the dominant to perceive their way of being or doing things as the realised ideal"(Bourdieu 1984: 384).

Thus, the purpose of stating that the 'south-as-backward' image came into being with Unification is not to deny the reality of the pre-Unification situation described above. Rather it is to stress that Unification brought about a new relationship; instituted a new discourse. 'North' and 'South' were brought together as parts of a new nation when previously there had been a series of independent states.

What then was the nature of this new relationship? How was it manifested? And what role did the ideology of backwardness play in the early years of the new nation state? In answering these questions I will look firstly at the specific effects of Unification on southern society in political, economic and social terms, and secondly at the images and representations of the South that accompanied the changes

2.1.2. The Effects of Unification

The process of Unification was less a joining together of several separate states than the 'annexation' of most of these states to Piemonte, locus of the most powerful

political and economic 'interests'. (cf Fissore & Meinardi 1976: 21). The Piemontese ensured that it was 'their' unification by insisting that the Savoy king Vittorio Emanuele II retained this title rather than become Vittorio Emanuele I (of Italy)and by extending to the whole peninsula the Piemontese legal and fiscal systems. These had an almost entirely negative effect on southern society plunging industry in the area (such as it was) into crisis. A uniform system of taxation was imposed, the burdens of which were felt particularly harshly in the South since land was most severely affected. A precarious situation was thus aggravated.

The heavy taxation served to pay off the 'national' (i.e.. Piemontese) debt which had been incurred through military expenses and through the rapid development process taking place in the north with industrialisation and the capitalisation of agriculture. In other words, southerners were financing a process from which they derived no benefit (Fissore & Meinardi: 25).

The local southern bourgeoisie suffered less in this situation than the peasants:

> *Erano prevalentemente le masse, le cui condizioni di vita tendevano a peggiorare, a pagare i costi di questa politica fiscale, almeno nella misura in cui i proprietari terrieri erano in grado di scaricare su di esse una parta dei nuovi oneri, comprimendo i salari agricoli, aumentando i canoni di affito ecc.*
>
> It was above all the masses, whose living conditions were tending to get worse, who paid the costs of this fiscal policy, at least to the extent that the landowners were able to offload part of the new burdens on to them, squeezing agricultural salaries, increasing rents etc
>
> (ibid)

In political and administrative terms there were important effects on the south also, although the formal structure, instituted during the Napoleonic period from 1806-1815 was retained, being the same as that of Piemonte. Ideally, this system was a centralized and authoritarian one giving the local representatives of government (the Prefects), and hence the government itself, a great deal of central control over local administrative affairs. Local government was thus in principle fully integrated into national administration and local society subject to a unified legal code. Moreover, the system also tended towards, but also to an extent depended upon, cultural standardisation, through the use of a single official language, the dissemination of nationalist ideology etc.

However applied to Italy, and in particular to the southern regions, this system had very different effects:

> instead of the state at the centre issuing commands instantly obeyed at the periphery, the periphery used the centralised administrative structure to protect its local autonomy.
> (Arlacchi 1983: 19)

Since this administrative system was imposed by a foreign power (the French) there was little acceptance of the ideology behind the system - "French rule could not animate administration through a national unifying myth" (Tarrow 1977:59-60). As a consequence, the loyalty among the local elite to the central powers, necessary for the proper functioning of a centralised administration did not develop and instead this elite used the powers given to it to serve its own interests - adjusting taxation so that they themselves were not adversely affected and controlling the distribution of communal lands. The government found itself protecting the autonomy of the local elite in order to guarantee their support in elections. In return for votes the Prefects turned a blind eye to their abuses of power (Colclough 1969: 67).

With Unification there was a renewed drive towards centralisation. Piemontese functionaries were sent to the south to take control of the local administrations and Piemontese troops were used to control any uprisings or rebellions among the peasantry.

The already grave situation in the southern countryside, together with the increased immiseration of the peasantry produced by Unification, led to a great deal of tension and instability culminating in the phenomenon of so-called *brigantaggio* or 'brigandage'. The brigands lived by robbing landlords, rustling, kidnapping and demanding ransom money. As will be discussed in the next section, they were viewed by the dominant classes of the new state as criminals and this classification of the problem provided the rationale for eradication of the problem: brutal military suppression. This was in the interests not only of the centralising forces but also of those southern gentry who were on the receiving end of the brigands' anger. The use of government troops to quell peasant uprisings thus served the purpose of maintaining the social relations which had in part given rise to such uprisings in the first place.

In 1887 a new protectionist tariff was introduced which favoured both northern industrial interests and the dominant, grain-growing southern interests. The southern *latifondisti.* who had a strong voice in Parliament thus became the natural allies of the northern, capitalist industrialists who for different reasons also favoured the protectionist policy. The tariff meant that southerners had to pay more for manufactured products (most of which came from northern Italy) and more for bread (Allum 1973: 21) and "drove the last nail in the south's economic coffin" (ibid). From then on the social and

economic conditions of the southern peasantry worsened and the southern landed gentry were allowed to maintain their position of dominance.

> *Questo stato di cose fu ancora una volta all'origine di profonde tensioni sociali.*
>
> This state of affairs was once more at the root of profound social tensions.
>
> (Fissore & Meinardi: 64).

As Clark points out "the peasants of southern Italy... were in a constant state of ferment and revolt in the 19th century." (ibid: 16). When what was officially defined as 'brigandage' had been eradicated, a kind of para-brigandage remained (ibid: 70). In addition, many peasants continued to exercise the *usi civici* and thus engaged in 'theft'. Many were imprisoned but "if pigs had not been fed on stolen acorns, they would have starved; if people had not stolen wood they would have had no fuel in winter" (ibid).

We have seen that even among the southern elite there was no nationalist ideology as yet - only a concern to protect their own interests. The peasants for their part saw the State as an alien, distant and illegitimate authority which demanded and exacted taxes in the same way as landlords exacted rent. Despite this new situation of integration and the general upheaval that it brought, becoming part of a nation meant little for most southerners in ideological terms and their beliefs, values and practices did not change drastically as a result of this process. Their social and economic relationships remained largely governed by a local sphere in which they were dependent either upon the ex-feudal landlords or the new class of bourgeois gentry. Yet at the same time, the action of the new state towards the South was to an extent governed, and certainly justified by its image of the region as backward and uncivilised. Let us turn now to look at some of these 19th Century images and their development.

2.1.3. Late 19th Century Images of the South

Although, as was mentioned, negative images of the south preceded Unification, in fact, the dominant image of the area was not a negative one but instead portrayed an almost idyllic land of abundance with rich and fertile soils - the 'Garden of Europe'. (cf Allum 1973b: 77). Thus it came as something of a shock to the northern observers when they discovered, firstly the problem of *brigantaggio* and secondly through the investigations of a group of Florentine intellectuals (in particular Franchetti in the 1870's) that there were grave problems of poverty and social order in what was now 'the south'. With this discovery the so-called *Questioni Meridionali* or southern question, was born. Its elaboration in parliament, and among intellectuals was one manifestation of the new relationship between North and South at the level of ideology.

The view which came to predominate was that later satirised by Gramsci in his analysis of the southern question:

> The south is a lead weight which impedes a more rapid civil development of Italy. The southerners are biologically inferior beings, semi-barbarians or complete barbarians by natural destiny; if the south is backward the fault is not to be found in the capitalist system, or in any other historical cause, but is the fault of the nature which has made the southerner lazy, incapable, criminal, barbarous, moderating his stepmother's fate by the purely individual outbursts of great geniuses, who are like solitary palms in an arid and sterile desert.
>
> (Gramsci 1957: 34)

The phenomenon of brigandage provided northerners with their first encounter with the south and the formers' perception of the latter was, as we have seen, justification for the military solution adopted. A perhaps extreme, but by no means isolated example of the northern representation of the brigands, and by extension southerners in general, is contained in the following account by G. Racioppi, based on a report by an officer of the *Carabinieri* .

> *"Le scelleraggini, le violenze, le crudeltà più nefarie ed immani, per cui l'uomo imbestiato perde aspetto, abito e natura umana, sono diletti consueti a questa ciclopica famiglia. Mozzare l'orecchio ai sequestrati, o, in un accesso di ira, freddarli, erano tra gli atti consueti il men crudele de' nuovi caraibi. Ma variare, dilungare, acconciare, quanto più infami, squisiti, i supplizi; arrostire le vittime a fuoco lento ... spaccarli rovesci dall'inforcatura a colpi di scure; carare gli occhi; mozzare la lingua o il naso; frangere le tibie, trascinarli a coda del cavallo; seppellirli vivi ancora...che più ? Cipriano e sua banda per sete di sangue mangiarono umana carne - E tutti tra gli urli dei suppliziati o i gemiti delle vittime, banchettavano, sbevezzavano, ballavano; imperocché quasi ogni banda aveva seco alcun Titiro silvestre, che li allegrasse al suono di rustiche avene o di un organino di Barberia; - idillio da cannibali -; e*

tra sollazi e giuochi, frequente cause di sangue tra loro, ottundevano il rimorso o la paura."

> The most iniquitous and appalling wickedness, violence and cruelty, through which man becomes bestial and loses his human nature, his outlook and his habits are customary pleasures to this grotesque family. Severing the ear of their captives, or in a fit of anger killing them in cold blood, were among the least cruel of the habitual acts of these 'neo-Caribbeans'. But they also varied, devised and prolonged even more vile and refined forms of torture: roasting their victims on a slow flame...; splitting them upside down from the crutch with blows from an axe; gouging out their eyes; severing their tongue or nose; crushing their shins ; dragging them by the tail of a horse; burying them alive - can there be more ? Cipriano and his band through their thirst for blood *ate human flesh* - and everyone amidst the cries of their captives or the screams of their victims banquetted, got drunk and danced: because almost every band had with it some Sylvan 'Titiro' who would entertain them to the sound of rustic pipes or a concertina from the land of 'Barberia' - idyll of cannibals - and amidst the merry making and games which frequently involved bloody arguments between them, fear and remorse were deadened.
>
> (from Racioppi, G. 1909, quoted in Fissore & Meinardi, 40-41).

From this description it can be seen that the brigands were seen as complete savages driven to the worst extremes of cruelty and even to cannibalism Hence the purpose of any attempt to end brigandage was a *civilising* act. The echoes of European colonialism in this example are clear and, just as in other European countries where sections of the populations which were proving to be problematic (to the aspirations and interests of the dominant class) were likened to the 'real' savages of the dark continents (e.g. British representations of the Irish), so southerners were likened to these supposedly 'primitive' peoples.

As in other European contexts, this representation was, towards the end of the 19th Century, given a quasi-scientific expression in the work of a group of physical anthropologists. They adopted the positivist evolutionary theories of the period, according to which the physical, psychological and social characteristics of human populations were a matter of racial development on a progressive scale from 'primitive' to 'civilised'. Having carried out research in the South, measuring heads, noting the height, the eye, skin and hair colour of the peasants, they concluded that southerners were an inferior, more primitive strain in relation to their northern counterparts; closer to the populations of Africa than to the 'civilised' races of northern Europe. This was sufficient explanation for the criminal and delinquent behaviour of the southerners.

One of the exponents of this *scuola antropologica* - Alfredo Niceforo - in a study of delinquency in Sardinia, 'discovered' that each area of the island had its own

particular form of criminality and that this corresponded to the racial type that predominated in that area. In the only zone that was relatively free from crime, and was populated by gentry, the people were of the 'celtic' type with blue eyes and blond hair. (Cited by Colajanni in Villari, R. [ed] 1972:433-4). In a more general work on the inferiority of the south, Niceforo says:

> *Qui l'Italia ha un'alta missione da compiere ed una grande colonia da civilizzare...L'Italia è una, ma politicamente soltanto; essa ha una variegata colorazione morale nello stesso modo con cui ha variegata colorazione antropoligica.*
>
> Here Italy has a great mission to carry out and a great colony to civilize... Italy is one, but only politically; it has a variegated moral colouration in the same way as it has a variegated anthropological colouration.
>
> (quoted in Fissore & Meinardi: 277)

Thus, according to Niceforo, North and South form two very different realities:

> *Quella del Nord ci si presenta con la fisionomia di una civiltà maggiormente diffusa, più fresca e moderna, l'altra Italia, quella del Sud, a si presente con una struttura morale e sociale che rammenta tempi primitivi e fors'anco barbari,*
>
> That of the North presents us with the character of a more widespread civilisation, fresher and more modern. The other Italy, that of the South, presents us with a moral and social structure that recalls primitive and perhaps even barbaric times.
>
> (ibid)

When the Sicilian *Fasci*[1] emerged in the 1890's they were regarded in much the same way as the *Briganti* - as delinquents and criminals and their clash with the state, once again involving blatant repression, gave further fuel to those in the North who saw southerners as innately criminal. Again examples can be found of images of the *Fasci* as utterly depraved organisations, led by thieves, *mafiosi* and reprobates (c.f. Fissore and Meinardi: 86-87).

As pointed out by Villari, the racist theories of the anthropological school did not, in themselves, have a profound or enduring effect in the history of the Southern Question (Villari, R.:431). They were amply contested by other intellectuals like Colajanni and Fortunato and later Salvemini, who pointed to the social and economic conditions at the root of the discontent of the peasants and the problems of the South in general.

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[1] Organised leagues of peasants and workers who protested against the prevailing economic conditions and declared an ideology of equality among all.

Yet at the same time, the *idea* that the South was inferior and backward, *and* the *images* which portrayed these characteristics *did* endure. Racial prejudice towards the South became a feature of Northern public opinion. It played a part (perhaps paradoxically) in the Socialist movement (to which Niceforo and others of the positivist school were attached) and became popular amongst northern workers influenced by the Socialist movement. Barbagallo cites the example of a socialist leader in the Po valley - "in fama quasi un apostolo nelle sue contrade", "almost an apostle in fame in his area" - who coined the terms *'nordici'* and *'sudici'*. The former is a normally used and accepted term for 'northerner'. *Sudici* on the other hand is a play on words meaning not southerners but 'dirty', 'filthy', 'obscene', 'unclean'. Here we have then another excellent example of northern prejudicial stereotyping (Barbagallo 1980: 31).

Moreover the very fact the the racist theories were able to emerge and achieve credence *at all*, even after the detailed investigations of Franchetti, Sonnino et al in the 1870's, is testimony to the fact that that they were merely an *elaboration* , a marginally more extreme form of a negative representation which was much more deeply rooted in the asymmetrical relationship between North and South.

As the process of Northern industrialisation continued into the 20th century experiencing something of an 'industrial revolution' from 1898 onwards (Villari, R.: 311), little changed in the South, except inasmuch as the few industries in Naples went into decline and agricultural relations continued to stagnate. In the midst of the 'euphoria' of the Giolitti government of that period, the Mezzogiorno became in the northern representation, as well as backward, criminal, inferior etc., a *"palla di piombo "*, a lead weight on the development and progress of the nation.

In summary then, Unification was a crucial stage in the process of the integration of the southern part of the peninsula into a wider system. However at the local level, people's contact with the state was extremely limited, manifested predominantly in the payment of taxes, and their economic and social lives continued to be governed by their relationships with an exploitative landed class. Thus, while the northern perception of the South had a profound effect on its actions towards the area, the representations produced by this perception were not part of people's everyday lives at a local level. Let us turn now to the second stage of integration, dominated by Mussolini's regime.

2.2 Stage Two: The Fascist "Interlude"

It is generally accepted that Fascism, for the South, meant *stagnation*. Social relations were, as Gribaudi puts it, "frozen" (1978: 32). However, as has been pointed out by some observers, Fascism did bring about changes at the local level, particularly in terms of ideology, which would have important repercussions in the later post-war development of the area (cf. Allum 1973: 277; Colclough 1969: 82). I will therefore regard it as a new stage in the integration of southern peripheral communities into the national core.

2.2.1. The Aftermath of the First World War

The years which preceded and followed the first World War did not, according to historians, significantly alter the relationship between North and South with the former continuing to expand and develop at the expense of the latter. The exigencies of the war created the conditions for the rapid expansion of the arms industry and the heavy and mechanical industries associated with it - all of these situated in the North. This war economy thus acted as a 'trampoline' for the take off of northern industrial interests and caused something of an economic miracle in this area (Fissore & Meinardi 1976: 128; Clark, M. 1984: 190). However, the benefits of this 'miracle' were limited to the North and within the North to specific sectors and a small selection of firms (e.g. Fiat). There was much discontent among the poorly paid workers, providing fertile ground for the emergence of socialism as people became aware of the events in Russia. This was later to become an example to many southerners. In the meantime however, little changed in the South and southern capital was used to help finance the northern boom (Clark: 191), thus further weakening its position.

For the first time southern peasants were called up in large numbers to fight for their country. This eased the pressure on the land and created a climate of rising expectation to which the government responded with promises of 'land for the peasants' on their return from the war. There are conflicting accounts of whether this oft-repeated promise was fulfilled. According to Procacci they "found the same poverty that they had left behind, fields that were badly worked and stables that were empty" (Procacci 1970: 408).

Fissore and Meinardi, along the same lines, state that the land problem was resolved:

> *dal perpetuarsi di un immobilismo della struttura fondiaria che andava a tutto beneficio delle classi possidenti*
>
> by the perpetuation of an ultra-conservatism in the land tenure system that solely benefitted the landowning classes.
> (Fissore & Meinardi op cit: 130)

On the other hand according to Clark, while there may not have been a fulfilment of the promise as such, inflation during the war 'boom' had meant that the landed class had suffered in the South and for the first time obtaining land had become a reality for many peasants:

> Often they acquired it easily enough, buying from frightened or impoverished landowners; sometimes they took it by force, although in practice very little force was needed. Peasants would march symbolically on to barren or uncultivated land, would raise their flags and set to work
> (Clark: 209)

Whatever the precise nature of events, what is certain is that there was a great deal of agitation among the peasantry if not over land then over the high cost of living. There were protests, riots and land occupations. To some extent this was inspired by the ideas of Socialism which many had encountered during their period as soldiers, hearing about the Russian Revolution and about the unrest among northern workers. In fact their horizons had been considerably broadened by involvement in the Great War. Ultimately the Socialist movement failed however, since it was poorly organised and had nothing concrete to offer the peasants. In addition it was weakened by the economic crisis which hit the country in 1919 and which gave a renewed force to the bourgeoisie who had been on the receiving end of peasant agitation. It is in this climate of the re-establishment of the middle-classes that Fascism emerged.

2.2.2. Fascism and its effects on the south

The precise reasons for the emergence of Fascism are of course complex and cannot be discussed at length here. However, it is reasonable to concord with Fissore and Meinardi in saying that

> *il fascismo si impose come controffensiva di coloro che erano stati messi alle corde dalla lotta del '19/20 e ai quali le condizioni di debolezza del movimento di classe offrirono il terreno ideale per il contrattaco*
>
> fascism imposed itself as the counter offensive of those who were on the receiving end of the agitations of 1919-20 and to whom the weak state of the working class movement offered ideal terrain for a counter-attack.
> (Fissore & Meinardi op cit: 134)

Once again violence was used in the establishment of the regime. The state and its local representatives, the prefects and police, turned a blind eye to the actions of the *squadristi* - the organised gangs of young men who beat up socialists and set fire to their premises etc.

The kind of images of the South that we found in the previous section were not developed at all during the 20 years of the Regime. On the contrary, the Southern Question was *prohibited*.. Even the word *Mezzogiorno* was cancelled from the national vocabulary and hence the problem was done away with by decree. Its existence too readily undermined the unity of Mussolini's nationalist discourse. At all times and in all contexts this nationalism was stressed - nothing was allowed to deflect from it. Every action taken by the Regime was accompanied by explicit demagogic pronouncements and jingoistic rhetoric justifying these actions.

In agriculture the *Battaglia del grano* was launched, aimed at giving the country greater autonomy in its food provision and reducing the need for imports in the event of war. In fact Mussolini considered Italy to be in a permanent state of war and hence keeping up the nation's fighting spirit was a continuous task. His militaristic and colonial actions in Ethiopia and assisting Franco in Spain required the provision of more and more grain supplies. The effect of this policy on the economy and social structure of the South was to bolster the position of the traditional grain-producing landowners, thus in effect reproducing the *blocco storico* discussed above. More and more land was converted to grain and the prospect of changing social relations and an end to the dominance of this class of mainly absentee landowners, seen as the root of the stagnation of the South by most observers, became even more remote.

The 'Battle for Grain' was accompanied by a 'ruralisation' programme which had several facets. Its overall effect was again to increase the stranglehold of the gentry and the immiseration of the peasantry.

'Ruralisation' involved, as well as growing grain for the greater glory of the nation, a process of 'creating' peasants: encouraging/ enforcing the peasantry to stay on the land through a combination of autarchic measures and an explicit ideology mystifying the 'idea' of the peasant and his/her relation to the land and to the nation. Emigrants to America were encouraged, with promises and the glory of participating in Mussolini's grand project, to return to their native country. On return however, they found very little in in the way of land or in changes in who was in command at the local level. Moreover,

they found that there were now rigidly imposed restrictions on both internal and foreign migration.

These restrictions were another aspect of the project to ruralise the country and had the effect of forcing the peasants to rely on their *'fazzoletti di terra'* or 'handkerchief plots' for subsistence. In this way the 'safety valve' of emigration was closed off. Large sections of the population were either unemployed or underemployed although this was beyond mention, the use of the word 'unemployment' also having been forbidden.

A new duty was place on each peasant family: to propagate the Italian race as rapidly as possible to provide more workers for the land and more fighting sons for the wars of the nation. The large family was idealised and those who married early and had large numbers of children were given prizes for assisting in the propagation of the race. Those who *did not* contribute to this project were penalised - with, for example, celibate men being excluded from positions of power. All of these things had the effect of increasing the strain of the population on the land and increasing the misery of the peasantry.

The idea of the peasant and his role in the rise of the nation was also fostered through gatherings of the 'rural masses', pro-fascist peasant songs, and for the first time, the use of the mass-media - in particularly the cinema - to portray images of a happy peasantry - and the radio - for broadcasting speeches and addresses by Mussolini.

The idea of the small-holding peasant was also promoted and indeed the number of small-holders in relation to landless labourers increased rapidly. In this way Mussolini presented himself as the *'amico dei contadini'* - the 'peasants' friend' (Mottura & Pugliese 1974: 24), granting them what they had always wanted.

However, in reality far from improving the lot of the smallholders, this process made their condition worse. The export-oriented cultivation of vines, olives and fruit, and the raising of livestock were discouraged in favour of grain production. In this way agricultural productivity actually decreased - even in grain - sacrificed to the more important task of creating a conservative peasantry (ibid: 25). In addition very high demand for land caused rents to be increased and old forms of contract, which were extremely unfavourable to the peasantry, to be restored (Marrone 1979: 124):

> *Stretti nella tenaglia degli inasprimenti fiscali e della politica degli ammassi obbligatori, essi [i contadini] avevano sviluppato una produzione sempre più orientata verso l'autoconsumo, che pur non riusciva a soddisfare il fabbisogno della famiglia contadina.*
>
> Caught in the grip of exacerbated taxation and of the policy of compulsory requisitioning, [the peasants] resorted to production increasingly geared towards subsistence, which even then did not succeed in satisfying the needs of the peasant family
> (ibid: 123)

Consequently there was,

> *... un totale congelamento ... dei rapporti preesistenti nelle campagne e un regresso a forme di compartecipazione e di salario in natura ...Restava un settore agricolo ingigantito oltre misura, con una bassissima produttività e un'enorme fascia di sottoccupati e di precari, un'offerta di lavoro strabordante, irrigidita e resa inoffensiva da misure legislettive e poliziesche.*
>
> ... a total freezing ... of pre-existing [social] relations in the countryside and a regression to forms of sharecropping and payment in kind ... The agricultural sector was enlarged beyond measure, with extremely low productivity, a huge sector of underemployed or precariously employed and an excessive labour supply, immobile and rendered passive by legalistic and police measures.
> (Gribaudi 1978: 32)

In its political organisation also, the Regime served to entrench traditional social relations, granting power to the landed *notabili* and reproducing the politics of *trasformismo*. As Chubb points out, Mussolini had little choice but to co-opt southern landed interests to his cause since they were not interested in the ideology of Fascism and yet he required their votes at the early stages of the Regime:

> Given the limited effectiveness of the ideological appeals by means of which he had achieved power in the North, Mussolini, like the Liberals before him, came quickly to the realisation that he could win the necessary support in the South only by striking an agreement with the *grandi elettori*, the leaders of the traditional clienteles. So long as [he] required electoral support ... the few 'ideological' Fascists in the South, whose goal was to eliminate the old clienteles and mobilise the masses directly, found themselves powerless to prevent the infiltration of the *fasci* by the local bosses.
> (Chubb 1982: 25)

For their part the *grandi elettori* were quick to jump on the Fascist bandwagon as soon as they realised that support for Mussolini was the surest means of maintaining and extending their position.

Uniform Fascist organisations and institutions were subsequently extended to all communities at all levels and in all activities from the political and administrative to

the economic and cultural. The elected *sindaco* or mayor was replaced by a government appointed *podestà* and sections of the Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF) - National Fascist Party were instituted in every *comune*. Thus for the first time in the South, there was mass party organisation at a local level and the *comuni* of the South were integrated into the national political system.

There were uniform recreational and welfare institutions: each town had its *'dopolavoro'* - and afterwork recreational club; its *Ente Comunale di Assistenza* - Town Welfare Agency for poor relief; its *Opera Nazionale Ballila* - a youth recreational and sports organisation which promoted physical fitness and strength as well as acting as a training ground for the future soldiers of the nation. At school children were indoctrinated with Fascist ideology although this was only effective at primary level and did not result in the creation of a Fascist intelligentsia (Clark op cit: 246).

It is continually emphasised in the literature (e.g. Allum 1973: 74; Chubb 1980: 24-5) and to an extent it must be agreed, that despite the introduction of these new organisational structures, the integration of the South into the nation under Fascism was once again nominal. Thus frequently the positions of *podestà* and Fascist Party Secretary were monopolised by local bosses or the heads of leading families, adapting the Regime to their needs rather than being moulded by it. The Party gave many notables a 'position' but their ideological commitment was low; and the general population took part in organisations from fear or resignation rather than from any fervour for Fascism.

Yet at the same time it is necessary to strike a balance between, on the one hand recognising this continuity and, on the other, emphasising the real novelty of the changes. Thus while integration in this period meant, largely, the entrenchment of pre-existing social relations and increased economic hardship, it cannot be denied that Mussolini's ceaseless nationalist propaganda was indelibly imprinted on people's lives. In addition in having to fight for 'their' country, southern peasants were brought to a new awareness of the Italian nation. Finally, as pointed out by Colclough (1969), the fact that party organisations and associations were present at a local level, penetrating to the most remote towns, had a marked effect. Local leaders *were* to a greater extent made answerable to the Fascist hierarchy and in this way the Regime hastened the demise of the local notables and encouraged the emergence of a system in which professional politicians attached to the mass party distributed the favours of the state. Thus as Chubb says:

> the Fascist party can perhaps be seen as a precursor of the post war party of mass patronage, so well exemplified ... by the Christian Democratic Party
>
> (Chubb 1982: 27)

At this point then, it is necessary to turn to this post war period and the third stage of integration of the southern periphery into the wider core.

2.3. Stage Three: Images of the South since World War II

2.3.1. The Aftermath of World War II

The fall of Mussolini and the end of the War saw southern Italy on its knees, in a deep economic crisis. Although the war had to an extent broken the artificial equilibrium created by Fascism and eased the pressure on land through conscription, it also created a crisis in subsistence agriculture. The compulsory requisitioning of grain to feed the towns and the army meant that prices soared. Moreover, the rationing of food was always late and irregular and led peasants to resort to the black market for survival (Marrone 1979: 124). Agricultural production fell and the presence of the Allies, who pumped large amounts of money into circulation, caused further massive price increases. In the years that followed, the government adopted a *laissez faire* policy in the national economy which, while favouring the reconstruction of northern industry, left southern productive structures in disarray (Gribaudi op cit: 34).

As a result of these economic conditions, the situation in the South was extremely unstable with social unrest in town and country. The tensions were accentuated by local political changes as communities sought to rid themselves of their Fascist ex-leaders and were not always supported in their efforts by the Allies. The crisis came to a head in frequent protests and land occupations, some of which the Communist Party succeeded in organising; and where there was no organised protest there was often a high level of violence and crime.

It was in this climate of crisis that the 'forbidden' Southern Question re-emerged and the relationship between North and South, core and periphery, entered a new phase. This then, is the start of the third 'stage of integration' through which the peripheral South has become gradually and increasingly involved in a wider encompassing core economy and culture. Until this stage the changes in the core-periphery relationship did not drastically alter the *local* nature of the the social structure and value system of peripheral communities. In addition, while the images and representations of the South as backward were an important aspect of the relationship, serving to categorise the region

and perpetuate its relative position in the dominant classification, at the same time, those images and representations did not form part of people's everyday lives at a local level; part of their identity and self-representation.

With the onset of this third stage, the situation changed drastically and social relations at the local level *were* transformed. People throughout local communities (and not just the local elite) did begin to participate directly in the wider system through education, other forms of state intervention, emigration, the media and through patterns of consumption in the market place.

This increased integration did not by any means mean an end to the existence of the periphery. The process should not be characterised as homogenizing. On the contrary, the core-periphery relationship, while being transformed was also reproduced. Thus, as will be shown below, there was still perceived to be a Southern Problem; the South continued to be represented as backward, uncivilised, in need of development etc. Moreover, southerners increasingly came into contact with these representations in their everyday lives and consequently incorporated them into their own self-representation. How was the image of the South as backward reproduced in the post war period?

2.3.2. 1945-1960: The Ideology of 'Pre-industrialisation' and the 'Technical' Backwardness of the South

The single most important characteristic of this period was the new role acquired by the State in the life of the South. What then was the State's attitude towards the South? What policies were adopted? On what perceptions of the South were these based?

In the first instance the Southern Question was not dealt with explicitly at all. Yet even in this silence, the subsequent attitude of the post war state towards the South was prefigured. Hence:

> *Dal '43 al '48 la discussione e le misure concrete prese per la ricostruzione dimenticarono quasi del tutto il Mezzogiorno, trattandolo come elemento residuale di cui occuparsi quando i settori fondamentali dell'economia, collocati nel Nord, fossero stati rilanciati. Nessuna forza politica in questo periodo si fece portatrice di istanze meridionaliste: il dibattito alla Costituente sulla questione meridionale fu assolutamente carente*
>
> From 1943-48, [parliamentary] debate and concrete measures for reconstruction almost completely forgot about the South, treating it like a residual element to worry about once the fundamental sectors of the economy, situated in the North, had been relaunched. No political force was 'southernist' in this period: debate on the

> Southern Question in the Constitutional Assembly was completely absent
>
> (Gribaudi 1980: 34)

The principal task of the post war state then, reconstruction, was regarded as a matter of boosting the industrial economy of the North and it was not until it became apparent that there was a problem of social order in the South that it was realised that something would have to be done there too:

> *Il permanere di una situazione sociale obiettivamente esplosiva ed il timore per la crescente penetrazione tra le masse contadine della propaganda e dell'organizzazione comunista, avevano convinto le classi dirigenti ... della necessità di attuare nei confronti del Sud un cambiamento di rotta*
>
> The persistence of an objectively explosive social situation and the fear of the growing penetration of communist propaganda and organisation among the peasant masses, persuaded the ruling classes ... that it was necessary to take a change of direction with respect to the South
>
> (Fissore & Meinardi op cit: 188)

Yet even as this 'change of direction' had enormous effects on the South, the primacy of northern industrial interests was maintained and the subordinate role of the South in the national economy, previously implicit, was made explicit and justified. Thus the South was to benefit from an Agrarian Reform (1950) involving the expropriation of land from the large landowners and its redistribution among smallholders and the landless. In addition in the same year, the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno ('Southern Fund') was set up to finance state intervention in the South. But these provisions were made within the confines of a policy which regarded the South as 'unprepared' for industrial development. The Cassa would fund a process of 'pre-industrialisation' involving the extension of infrastructure and public works. Anything other than concentration on agriculture and public works would interfere with and weaken the leading role of northern industry in national development (cf. Graziani 1978: 356; Fissore & Meinardi: 189; Di Giorgio & Moscati 1980: 53; Del Monte & Giannola: 121)

In thus representing the South as unprepared or 'not susceptible' for industrialisation, the State reproduced the relative position of the South as a 'problem' and 'backward' region, peripheral to the process of national development.

However, this general statement of the continued categorical 'backwardness' of the South does not grasp the complexity of the post war situation in which various emergent political forces struggled to take the reins of the nation and, in the South, to "capture the peasants" as Tarrow puts it (1967: 300).

Tarrow describes how the DC established itself as the *partito di stato* by combining the progressive development of the party and its ideology with the absorption of local notables together with their clientelistic method of relating to the electorate:

> ... the transformation [of the DC] did not turn a party of notables into a modern mass party, ... but *suffused the structures of the mass party with the political techniques that are native to the political culture*
>
> (Tarrow 1967: 323 -author's emphasis)

However, this transformation did not simply allow the *notabili* to retain their position. Rather, local elites were brought under attack while the new organisation of the DC assisted the emergence of a new elite of party functionaries:

> It was no longer sufficient for an individual to be a prominent landowner or professional in order to run for office under the Dc banner; he had to have experience in the party's bureaucracy first.
> (ibid: 310)

In some cases the traditional notables succeeded in transferring their allegiance in the manner of trasformismo, to adapt to this new situation. In other cases however (and this was to an extent the case at Grottaminarda) the traditional elite attempted to conserve its position by shifting to the parties of the right - monarchists and fascists.

Those who benefited most from the situation were the new class of professional politicians and experts who attached themselves to the DC and the state agencies and presented themselves to the peasantry as the beneficient distributors of the largesse of the state, while also being upholders of traditional values. In this way

> *si andava affermando il nuovo apparato di intermediazione che traeva la sua forza dal legame diretto o addirittura dalla identificazione con il potere politico: la legittimazione dell'intermediario non stava più nella sua figura morale o nella autorità, come per il vecchio patrono, ma nella capacità di offrire favori attraverso il rapporto diretto con le casse dello stato e il controllo del flusso delle risorse dal centro alla periferia*
>
> the new apparatus of mediation affirmed itself and drew its force from the direct tie or indeed its identification with political power: the legitimation of the intermediary no longer resided in his moral position or in his [personal] authority, as with the traditional patron, but in his capacity to offer favours by means of a direct link with the state purse and the control of the flow of resources from the centre to the periphery.
>
> (Gribaudi 1980: 162)

This then is the frequently discussed shift from 'clientelism of the notable' to 'clientelism of the bureaucracy' (ibid: 326; Graziano 1984; Weingrod 1967-8). But it was no

mere shift of personnel with an elite of party functionaries taking over from the traditional notables in an unaltered structure. Rather, this political change was part of a major structural shift in the relations between core and periphery in the Italian context; a shift in which, as Marrone puts it:

> *lo stato italiano, questo grande estraneo nel Mezzogiorno, diventava di casa*
>
> the Italian state, that great stranger to the South, made itself at home
>
> (Marrone op cit: 269)

Institutional structures, inherited from Fascism, were already there for the effective spread of its influence. The state thus became the most important source of resources and the importance of land declined.

It is at this point that we return to the new theories and strategies of intervention for the South. The form of this intervention was the massive transfer of funds to the South for public works, made within the context of an explicit theorisation of its effects by state-sponsored experts. It was to this theorisation and to these experts that the new emerging class of professional politicians of the DC aligned themselves. In fact in many cases 'expert' and 'politician' overlapped in the same person. At the same time a new political discourse developed making it necessary for the new elite to be competent in discussing 'planning and industrialisation', 'economic take-off', 'infrastructure', 'self-sustaining growth' etc. (Tarrow op cit: 326-7).

However, in adopting these positions in the DC and in the state agencies (especially the *Cassa*), together with the requisite language, they were not developing an *idea* - i.e. that of the development of the South. Rather they were granting themselves access to what subsequently became the most important source of wealth in the South, enabling themselves to control and take credit for its distribution. Hence

> Deputies and local politicians who deal with problems of patronage must use the language of planning, because it is within the language of planning that patronage is allocated.
>
> (ibid: 328)

The end result was indeed a new form of patronage. However, the change as stressed above was not simply one of personnel. Rather, the nature of community-nation linkages was itself changed. The influence of the state locally was increased enormously; personal status was no longer enough - the ability to obtain state resources was essential. This ability moreover, was now possible to acquire for a much broader category of 'brokers' intimately tied to the DC and distributing favours to clients in the name of the party.

Thus there was no longer an easily definable category of patrons who monopolised all links with the state and the 'outside world'.

However, it is first necessary to mention another aspect of this situation related to the language of planning. Although in practice largely rhetorical, a technique for gaining access to state funds, at the same time, this language is in itself extremely important for an understanding of the relationship between North and South in the 1950's. It is in and through this language that the dominant representation of the South as backward is reproduced.

Unlike the turn of the century images however, in post war images of the South, there was less reference to southern *culture*. Rather, the problem of the South was seen to be a purely economic and technical one which could be resolved by a series of economic and technical measures.

Thus in the first phase of state intervention in the South a policy of 'balanced development' was adopted, according to which the 'backwardness' (or 'depression') of an area - measurable by means of a series of indices, particularly income per capita - could be overcome only by increasing demand; in other words by raising basic levels of income and thus consumption, hence promoting the spread of the market and encouraging the emergence of otherwise inhibited entrepreneurs. In adopting this policy the state was drawing explicitly on various strands of Keynesian economic theory.

This is evident from the publications of *Svimez*[1], a para-state 'think tank' which greatly influenced the institution and subsequent operation of the *Cassa* (cf. Gribaudi 1980: 40). The experts in these organisations had close links with those in government (ibid: 54-5) and indeed with economists associated with the World Bank. Notable among these was Rosenstein-Roden who took an interest in Italy and supported the policy of pre-industrialisation to provide the 'big push' necessary to bring the South into line with the North and create the conditions for 'balanced development' (see Cafiero in *Svimez* 1982, 35/3: 49).

In an early document, Svimez took as their guide for describing the condition of the South, the classification developed by the World Bank and the American State department in which countries were categorised as 'backward', 'progressive' or 'in

[1] 'Svimez' is an abbreviation of *'Associazione per lo sivluppo industriale del Mezzogiorno'* - Association for the industrial development of South Italy.

transition'. 'Indices of depression' were singled out to establish the stage of development or backwardness of the different regions of the South. Income per capita was chosen as the most significant index of depression and this choice justified by referring to its use by the World Bank and the US state department.

In order to make sense of the use of these indices and of the classification which divides countries into 'backward', 'progressive' or 'in transition', it is necessary to understand not only the pre-existing classification of the South as backward which came into being with Unification. As well as this it is necessary to consider the post war international context in which the policies of the West, and particularly of America, towards colonised countries shifted from simple extraction of resources to the attempt to 'develop' using aid programmes. These would, through the application of science and technology, lead to increased production, increased incomes, the spread of the market and hence, increased prosperity (cf. Gribaudi 1980: 55 who quotes from a speech by Truman on this matter).

Two points should be made here: firstly that the rationale of this policy was less a desire for the (material) progress of the countries that were beneficiaries of the assistance than a recognition of the fact that new outlets were required to absorb the increased productive capacity of the West; and secondly, that while the 'development' of the 'backward' countries was couched in a technical language and the problem was seen as primarily economic, the *intention* of instigating this process was most certainly a 'civilising' one and thus had a cultural, and indeed a moral, component.

In the case of South Italy, this civilising intention can be seen in some of the indicators that were used to measure the degree of backwardness or depression of the area. Hence Svimez made a distinction between *"depressione ambientale"* (or environmental depression) and *"depressione civile"* (or civil depression). The former consisted of measurements of: (i) communication networks (the total length of roads and railways); (ii) the number of hospital beds per resident; and (iii) the percentage of the population with telephones. On the other hand *depressione civile* was an index based on levels of literacy. In all of these things the South was found to be well below the national average (Svimez 1950 quoted in Svimez 1981: 28-9).

Sanctioned by a putatively neutral state (itself drawing upon an internationally accepted discourse) and given the scientific status of an economic theory, these representations of the South appear to be incontestable. Southern 'backwardness', just like the 'backwardness' of the colonised countries, is here an objective economic fact,

manifested in the low standard of living relative to the rest of the country and in the absence of certain quantifiable indicators of a state of 'development'. [1]

It would be folly to deny the existence of the differences pointed to in this official representation of southern Italy. However, to use these differences as the basis on which to classify the South as 'backward', 'underdeveloped' or 'depressed' *only has meaning* in the context of an already established social relationship and an already established classification - a classification in which the Northern core has already defined itself as 'modern' and 'developed'. Hence it is the core-periphery relationship that is basic rather than the 'natural' difference.

Thus although there is a marked difference between the official post war and 19th Century representations of the South - the southerners are no longer, officially at least, regarded as innately inferior - the power relationship within which these representations are created (and which they help to reproduce) has been perpetuated. 'Backwardness' has become a technical problem to be overcome by 'economic growth'. On closer inspection however, it is clear that the civilising dimension has remained since the standards which define what is *not* backward are those which characterise the culture of the 'developers'.

2.3.3. After the 'Economic Miracle': Experiencing 'Backwardness and Modernity'.

The influence of the post war state radically altered the relationship between core and periphery in South Italy causing the demise of the traditional landed class and creating the space for a new class of experts, professionals, technicians and officials. State resources in the form of jobs, pensions, grants and subsidies replaced land as the principal economic resources and in this way South Italy was 'opened up' to the 'core'.

At the same time this opening up was as yet limited. It was not until the end of the 1950's that this process reached a new turning point and we move into the second phase of this third 'stage of integration'. Tendencies described above were accentuated, ordinary people became involved in social and cultural relationships that extended far beyond the community level and the new elite, from being 'protectors of tradition' became protagonists of development.

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[1] Moreover, this technical 'expert' representation is further supported by the even more 'basic' representation of the area as 'naturally disadvantaged' with poor soils, mountainous terrain and a lack of natural resources. This will be looked at in more detail in Chapter 4.

The object of this section is to look closely at this complex process in order to understand the core-periphery relationship that emerged in this period. It will be shown that from this period onwards, a conceptualisation of the relationship which relies solely on the idea of the linking functions of a group of mediators, is wholly inadequate.

A great many interrelated factors contributed to this new phase. Notable among these are (i) the increased integration of the Italian economy into wider European and international markets - particularly entry into the EEC; (ii) this was the period of the so-called 'economic miracle'; and (iii) there was massive emigration from the South to North Italy and Europe. However, perhaps the most obvious manifestation of this new phase at a national level was the radical shift in the state's policy of intervention in the South.

Abandoning the idea of pre-industrialisation, it embarked upon a massive programme of industrial development involving large incentives for private investors, but more importantly the installation of state-sponsored industries. In 1957, a new law was passed allocating 40% of the total investment in state industry, and 60% of that earmarked for new factories, to the South (cf. Fissore & Meinardi op cit: 192; Marelli 1972: 12; Gribaudi op cit: 106).

Thus 'it was decided that' the South was to have its *'decollo'* or 'take-off'. The initial investments took the form of large-scale capital-intensive factories particularly in the steel and petrochemical industries.

The effects of the introduction of these large-scale industries into the predominantly agricultural economy of the South have become a well-known feature of the recent social and economic history of the region.

The industries were situated according to a policy of 'pole development'. Large factories were imposed upon local economies and were supposed to induce ulterior development of subsidiaries in the area. Far from doing so however, these massive industries became the so-called 'Cathedrals in the desert'. Not only did they fail to produce *'effetti indotti'* (induced effects)(all the supplies came from industries in the North), they also did nothing to alleviate the principal problem faced by southerners - unemployment - since they were capital- rather than labour-intensive.

More than this however, their effect was to severely disrupt the local social and economic structure. Representing the most stable opportunity available locally, the factory jobs appealed not only to the unemployed but also to already qualified and skilled

workers in small and medium sized enterprises. These latter, already characterised by instability, often folded up and the tendency of peasants and artisans to leave more traditional enterprises was accentuated. The state compensated for this by means of subsidies and transfer payments. In this way its influence locally was extended, while the subordinate position of the South was reproduced.

A closer look at the attitudes and the rationale that underpinned the policy of industrialisation by poles will make it less surprising that a policy expressly designed to get rid of the problems of the South should in fact result in the reproduction of the relative position of the region in economic and cultural terms.

In characterising these attitudes - in other words, core attitudes towards the southern periphery contained in this policy - it is necessary to make clear 'who' the core is. It must be remembered that the policy was a matter of national debate between the various economic, political and bureaucratic interests. Among these were the private industrial interests of the North who continually put pressure on the state to avoid competition from the South. Secondly there were those involved in national planning, in organisations like Svimez, who seek to promote the industrial development of the South but whose justifications for such development are, as we will see, frequently contradictory. Then, in addition there was the State itself, together with the 'state party', the DC, whose interest in the continued flow of resources to the South has been described and who became outspoken proponents of the industrialisation policy in this period.

It is inappropriate here to go into the details of the debates and differences between these groups. What should be pointed out however, is that although the national planners are largely 'southernist' and the state and the DC either southernist or *'southernised'*, neither, as such *represents* the South as a region in a political sense. Thus it is possible to consider these three forces together as 'the core' and to put together a dominant representation of the South that they all more or less share.

The first thing to note is that once again, the policy of pole development was inspired by, and found justification in, theories of economic development current at the time in Italy and also supported and sanctioned by international bodies concerned with economic development. The findings of studies by the United Nations and the Economic commission for Europe were used by Svimez to back up their view that capital intensive investments were necessary for the 'take off' of 'backward areas' (cf. Gribaudi 1980: 117). The following example quoted by Gribaudi from the European Economic Commission illustrates the kind of proposals that the Italian state adopted:

> *Le industrie che producono principalmente per il mercato locale di una regione arretrata provvedono soltanto a dei bisogni limitati e il loro sviluppo non può essere più rapido di quello della regione presa nel suo insieme. Per contro, le industrie 'nuove' servono a provvedere a necessità che sorgono principalmente nelle regione più progredite del paese. Risultato altretanto importante è che attraverso queste industrie si introducono procedimenti e metodi tecnici molto più progrediti di quelli prevalenti nella regione ... Poiché il valore delle nuove industrie consiste nelle loro eccezionali possibilità di ulteriore espansione, è evidente che il numero degli addetti che esse assorbono per unità di capitale investito ha poca importanza ...*
>
> The industries that produce principally for the local market of a backward region only supply a limited need and their development cannot be as rapid as the region as a whole. On the other hand the 'new' industries serve to provide for needs that arise principally in the advanced regions of the country. An equally important result is that through these new industries, new procedures and techniques are introduced which are much more advanced than those found in the poor regions ... Since the value of the new industries consists in their exceptional potential for further expansion, it is evident that the number of workers they absorb per unit of invested capital has little importance.
>
> (European Economic Commission quoted in Gribaudi op cit: 117)

It can be seen from this statement that the division between 'backward' and 'progressive', the belief that the latter is 'better' and the idea that contact with 'progress' will inevitably (almost by contagion) result in the improvement of the 'backward' areas, are all taken for granted.

This same almost blind faith in a process of modernisation whereby 'progress' will diffuse to the periphery through mere contact with the advanced areas can be found also in the stance taken by the Italian policy makers. In formulating policy, they explicitly adopted the theories of economic development elaborated by the French economist Perroux.

According to Perroux, economic development proceeded by means of 'generative industries' which formed poles around which gather the subsidiaries to which it is tied. The ties lead to the stimulation of new industries and the further development of technology. Thus the action of the state to intensify this process can only be beneficial: provide the generative industries and the rest will follow - subsidiaries leading to new kinds of consumers with new needs, leading to new industries and so on. Moreover, the regional imbalance in this process is seen as a positive factor and consequently the deliberate accentuation of this imbalance also becomes justified (see Gribaudi op cit: 118-9; Biondi & Coppola 1974: 41-4).

Thus Della Porta, an economic 'expert' and spokesman of the DC, presented the prospect of pole development as a violent and disruptive force on local social structures and therefore one which required the state to plan the 'break' and render it more acceptable:

> *Non si ha sviluppo senza migrazione delle imprese più deboli, senza involuzioni di certe zone, senza rottura violenta di certe abitudine e comportamenti, senza modificazioni della struttura sociale. Il progresso di alcuni significa sempre un regresso - almeno relativo - di altri, e pertanto, è necessario ammortizzare al massimo gli effetti degli squilibri*
>
> There is no development without the migration of the weakest enterprises, without the regression of certain zones, without the violent rupture of certain habits and behaviour, without modification to the social structure. The progress of some always means a regression - at least relative - of others and therefore, it is necessary to soften as much as possible the effects of the imbalance
> (Della Porta 1960, in Gribaudi op cit: 120)

From these accounts it seems to me that the position of the South is clear. It is still the backward partner of an asymmetrical relationship in which it is subject to the 'civilising' actions of the core. The image of the South contained in these policies is accompanied by a self-image, an attitude whereby the policy makers, politicians and economists place themselves in the position of neutral arbiters, able to decide in an abstract way 'what the South needs'.

To them, the emigration of thousands of southerners, a tendency accentuated by pole development and causing massive upheaval in southern communities, was an abstract economic necessity. The entry into the Common Market which both increased the possibilities of emigration *and* the choice of 'growth poles', was accepted and hailed as a great development, to be encouraged (Gribaudi op cit: 111). As Gribaudi goes on to point out,

> *La considerazione delle caratteristiche della situazione locale, la valutazione dei prezzi che alcune classi devono pagare per la vittoria di un tale 'sviluppo' non compaiono nei loro scritti*
>
> The consideration of the characteristics of local situations, the appreciation of the price that certain classes were having to pay for the victory of such 'development', do not appear in their writings[1]
> (ibid: 111-2)

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[1] A vivid account of this upheaval *can* however be gained from a reading of Gavino Ledda's *Padre Padrone* pp144-53

Moreover, it is ironic and plainly contradictory that the characteristics used to justify the policy of pole development subsequently became the basis for criticising that policy. This is pointed out, once again by Gribaudi:

> *prima, per sostenere l'utilità di uno sviluppo squilibrato is afferma che le 'unità motrici' indurrano effetti positivi sul territorio a monte e a valle dell'insediamento. In seguito si dice che i 'grandi investimenti' che verranno fatti nel Mezzogiorno sono assolutamente autonomi e indipendenti dal territorio circostante, cosa che farebbe pensare quindi a una loro incapacità si provocare effetti di induzione.*
>
> At first, in order to sustain the utility of unbalanced development, it is affirmed that the 'generative industries' will induce positive effects in the surrounding territory. Then it is said that these large-scale investments in the South will be absolutely autonomous and independent from the surrounding territory which thus leads one to suspect an *incapacity* to induce any such effects.
> (ibid: 110)

This contradiction can be understood if it is remembered that northern private interests also had a say in things. As the dominant force in the national economy, they were in favour of a free market and any intervention by the state in industry was anathema. Industry in the South would lead to a surplus of productive capacity and make the country weaker in Europe. Instead they still favoured agriculture and tourism for the South.

In order to justify the industrialisation policy then, the 'southernist' had to respond to these arguments; and they did so by assuring northern interests that southern industry *would* be competitive and autonomous and *would not* create *'doppioni'* (i.e. double up on industries already existing in the North).

Overall however, the North was still against southern industrialisation and in the attitude they adopt towards this policy it is possible to see even more strongly the opposition of images that was apparent in the position of the policy makers. Thus they represent themselves as a healthy, efficient and neutral force as opposed to the parasitic and corrupt nature of the southernists involved in state intervention. This is brought out by the following quote from one of the organs of the dominant economic class of the North, a journal called *'Mondo Economico'*;

> *Il discutere dal Milano con gli amici del Sud non sempre è facile. Per quel che di personale, di passionale, al quale non sempre essi sanno sottrarsi. Dal che deriva, anche, una differenza di linguaggio, di metodo di lavoro. Noi non abbiamo scritto mai 'Viva il signor ministro X'; né 'Abbasso il signor ministro Y'. Né ci siamo compiaciuti di andare ad assistere a cerimonie di posa della prima*

pietra degli stabilimenti. Solo ci limitiamo a osservare e studiare ... esaminare, cioè sotto profilo economico se quella tal pietra ha da essere posto; se quella tal località è economicamente la più adatta

Talking from Milan to our friends in the South is not always easy - for the reason that they do not always know how to separate themselves from the personal, emotional level; from which situation derives also, a difference in language and a different way of working. We have never written 'Long live this minister' or 'Down with that minister'. Neither have we agreed to take part in ceremonies for the placing of the first stone of any factory. We limit ourselves to observing and studying ... examining that is, whether, in economic terms, such and such a stone should be placed; and whether such and such a locality is, economically, the most appropriate

(*Mondo Economico* editorial 1969 in Gribaudi op cit: 113-4)

This statement was a reply to a letter from an exponent of Svimez which had pleaded the case of a new steel works at Taranto in South Italy. As can be seen the authors assume the position of neutral observers, rational judges of a situation definable according to objective economic criteria.

Previously this kind of assumption in the writings of the policy makers was not asserted but rather taken for granted. This time the qualities of rationality and neutrality are represented as criteria of superiority and are explicitly opposed to the imputed characteristics of southerners and southernists -*viz* emotional and clientelistic. The tone is haughty, denigratory and sardonic. An affectation of familiarity is ironically adopted ('our friends in the South' ...); and in criticising them for not rising above the personal level the South is held at arm's length.

Here then we have a clear example of the southern stereotype that has been discussed throughout this chapter, and which differs from that expressed by the policy makers only to the extent that it is explicitly denigratory and polemical. Structurally it presupposes the same classification and contributes to the reproduction of that classification.

Similar observations can be made about later phases of industrial development and such images have continued to appear right up to the 1980's in the statements of policy makers and politicians. One of the most common representations of the South, is as a ball and chain holding the country back from its progressive course. This image has re-emerged recently particularly in relation to the amount of transfer payments and subsidies received by the South regarded by many as excessive (see Graziani 1983).

So far the discussion has focussed on policies of industrialisation since these are one of the more accessible sources of material on images of the South. It must nevertheless

be remembered that there were many other forces involved in the process of 'opening up' communities of the South: emigration, education, the spread of the market and of the media, other facets of state intervention etc. However, looking at each of these in detail at a national level would have required much more extensive research beyond the scope of this thesis. They will be discussed at the ethnographic level in later chapters. Here I intend to mention only briefly some aspects of these forces.

Firstly it should be mentioned that the influence of the state on the South was not exhausted by the effects of policies of industrialisation. The development of public works and infrastructure continued and various forms of transfer payment were made to the South. The key to understanding these developments is not so much in the concrete provision of transport, communication and sanitary measures etc., but rather in the setting up of the agencies to administer these developments and staffing them with personnel. It is in this context that public administration burgeoned, providing the space for a vast array of professionals, officials and experts.

Extended educational opportunities provided openings for a much wider section of the population to occupy these positions, giving them access to the crucial resources of the state (or, in the case of teachers, by giving them the capacity to grant or withhold the qualifications necessary for such access). Participation in the struggle for and distribution of resources was thus open to a much wider, diffuse class of people. Even minor clerks and officials could exert some kind of control and people were able to turn to a much wider range of organisations, institutions and individuals for assistance - including an educated member of their own family - rather than relying solely on an elite of notables.

Other aspects of education are clearly important in this third stage of integration. In attending school and university to a much greater extent, ordinary southerners are participating in a national system. To an extent then, the family loses its monopoly on the inculcation and transmission of values and the dominance of standard Italian is further established. In addition, as both Ryan and Peabody point out, the dispositions acquired by children in the school are not only different from those that in earlier generations accompanied early incorporation into the agricultural work force, they also make it highly unlikely that those who have attended will ever return to working on the land (Ryan in press; Peabody 1979: 279).

Another effect of education is that it frequently removes young people from the local community. This is particularly true of higher education, when students go to university in the city. It also applies to most public appointments since candidates for a

post in public administration or teaching are required to take part in nationally organised *concorsi* or exams and if successful are more often than not required to take up employment, at least at the outset in Rome or one of the cities of the North.

Also removing people in large numbers from their communities, and causing great upheaval in the process, was emigration. While there is a long history of emigration from South Italy, it was with the start of the 'economic miracle' that southerners began to leave in droves for the booming industries of Northern Europe and North Italy.

This process had many effects. It contributed to the decline of the *notabili* by removing large numbers of peasant labourers and smallholders and reducing competition for land. In many southern communities, particularly in the poorest areas, there was severe depopulation particularly of young people. In most cases a great many emigrants have returned to their place of origin in recent years as the opportunities for employment in the North and in Europe have decreased.

One of the major consequences of this movement of population is that as emigrants in North Italy, southerners came face to face with the backward image that northerners had held of them for years. Setting themselves apart, and being set apart, they encountered at first hand the prejudice of the North and became explicitly *meridionali* - southerners, by definition backward and uncivilised[1]. While elsewhere in Europe they were merely 'Italians', the prejudice was frequently the same. This kind of prejudice is still very much a part of everyday life in Italy. At football matches, for example, southern fans are greeted by the chants of their northern and Roman rivals: Sardinian fans are taunted with 'monkey noises' - "U! U! U! " - a reference both to an imputed ape-like and primitive nature, and to the fact that their dialect is peppered with 'u' endings on words. Neapolitan fans are disparagingly addressed with chants of "Cho-Le-Ra! Cho-Le-Ra" or "Terremotati" both of which refer to disasters that have hit the city in recent years and both of which are evidence of its backwardness and general unattractiveness.

The new lives of emigrants also involved them in an environment which was very different from the one which they had left. Thus emigration also brought them face to face with 'modernity'. It raised their earnings, involved them in different work routines and in union activity; it presented them with new commodities not yet available

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[1] See Fofi, G. 1964 for an account of the effects of emigration on southerners in Turin. The frontispiece of this book sums up the prejudice encountered by Southerners. It displays an "Accommodation to let" sign in Turin. Below the main advert it states: *"Non si affitta ai meridionali"* - "No southerners".

in the South; and subsequently they returned to the South marked by this experience. All of these things combined to broaden and transform the arena in which their identity was defined.

In addition the remittances of those who managed to establish themselves became a substantial part of the income of those family members who remained at home, facilitating further changes in the local economy. Those who returned, especially in the more recent period, ceased to invest their savings in land because they found

> that they were putting their money into an enterprise whose product's market value was not keeping pace, whose labour input was absurdly high for the yield, and whose very labour itself was increasingly viewed as a source of shame.
> (Ryan in press)

Instead, they acted as carriers of economic change, opening small businesses, particularly commercial enterprises selling consumer goods associated with a 'modern' lifestyle, thus contributing to the increasing complexity of the southern economic structure.

The effect of market penetration in itself is another force which has brought 'modernity' to the communities of the South. Within the space of little more than a generation. the economic structure of these communities has been transformed to one "which can boast photographers, printers, hairdressing salons, a driving school, restaurants, dry cleaners, even a disco" (Ryan in press).

Much of the time this 'modernity' does not necessarily entail prosperity and the new enterprises in which southerners have become engaged are often just as precarious as those of the traditional economy, as we will see in later chapters. In addition, they are generally more dependent on external forces, since the provenance of most of the products sold is far from local and the fate of local enterprises is thus tied to the vagaries of wider markets.

It is also important to point out that the new consumer goods with which the South has been swamped in recent years are not merely goods but carry with them the signs of different lifestyles: they are accompanied by and embody the values of the culture which produced them and which seeks to promote them; they are accompanied by the attitudes and impressions of the returned emigrants who are perhaps the first to sell them locally; and they are accompanied by the images and representations of the media.

The media are of course, in their own right, of great importance in the process of integration particularly in this most recent phase. This should not be merely a matter of

recognising the massive increase in the *numbers* who own and use televisions, who read newspapers and magazines or who go to films and read literature. Rather it is a matter of recognising that through these media, images of different lifestyles are transmitted and disseminated and significantly, the classification of the 'traditional' and 'backward' South (or periphery) and the 'modern' North (or core), are reproduced.

Since the 1960's, numerous films have emerged dealing with the lot of southern emigrants to the cities of the North. Frequently they are comedies representing the emigrants as culturally incompetent misfits with backward ideas. Some are set in the South. One example is Ettore Scola's *Maccheroni* . Set in Naples, it is full of references to the stereotypical Neapolitan predilection for fantasy with the two main characters being a self-interested, hard, efficient, American manager and an emotional, family-oriented Neapolitan trying to be a playwright and convinced that his son will one day be a famous rock star.

Even where the main theme of the film is not the South or southerners, any appearance of a southerner or mention of the South is generally accompanied by some form of implicit or explicit comment on the area's backwardness or some other aspect of the southern stereotype. In one post war film about the war in Italy an Italian soldier describes Italian women to an American prisoner, telling him that the women of the North are tall, blond and beautiful - but *cold*, whereas, in the South they are small and dark - and extremely *hot*.

Other films, while attempting to take a sympathetic view of the South, often end up reproducing the asymmetrical relationship between core and periphery. This is true in my view, of films like Rosi's *Christ stopped at Eboli*, of *Padre Padrone* by the Taviani brothers and of *Tre Fratelli* (the Three Brothers) also by Francesco Rosi. The first two of these films are based on books set in the South, written by Carlo Levi and Gavino Ledda respectively. The former was set in Basilicata and consists of the observations of Levi as a political *confinato* in a small village during Fascism. The book made a huge impact when it was published immediately after the Second World War, since it was thought to be such an accurate portrayal of life in the South. Even today it colours the popular image of the South. Yet in many ways the author, as a northerner, tended to present a romanticised image of 'his peasants' as he describes them. In doing so, he fails to challenge the established classification of North and South and perpetuates the representation of southern backwardness.

This image of the South even extends beyond Italy: it is part of popular knowledge of South Italy in other countries of Europe that it is backward. This is taught in schools, being a favourite topic, for example, in the Scottish secondary school Geography curriculum. In addition it emerges time and again in documentaries and news items about Italy. In a BBC series on Italy, the two programmes about southern regions (Calabria and Basilicata) tended to focus on the traditions of the area or on the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity. In one of these, the cameras panned in on a group of old men sitting in the piazza, carefully picking out their craggy 'peasant' features, while the presenter spoke of the 'ancient lethargy' of the South. In another shot cement lorries rumbled through the town passing an old woman dressed in black sitting sewing outside her whitewashed cottage.

The point about all of these films, and indeed the images that appear elsewhere in the media every day, is not so much that they are *false*, but that they are not neutral or objective and tell us not only about the culture that is represented but also a great deal about its relation to the *representers*.

It can be seen then that these images have been reproduced transformed at each stage of integration. What is new about this latest stage is that the images have become a part of the everyday environment in which ordinary southerners live. Therefore, in order to situate themselves in social relationships, they must deal with these images. Showing how they do so will be the object of the ethnographic chapters which follow.

3. Summary

On outlining the three 'stages of integration' since Italian Unification, this chapter has sought to shed light on the process whereby the southern Italian periphery has become incorporated into a wider national and supranational core. In addition, it has sought, at each stage to illustrate the images and stereotypes that have been used to represent the two sides of the relationship produced and transformed by this process.

Southern Italy has been profoundly transformed by the process of integration, from the effects of Unification and the Piedmontese fiscal system to the Fascist ruralisation programme and finally, post war political, economic and demographic changes: the various forms and stages of state intervention, the emergence of political parties, in particular the DC, together with emigration, the extension of education and literacy, the influence of the market and of mass media. The general effect of this process

of transformation has been the gradual 'opening up' of communities and their inhabitants to relationships that extend 'beyond the community'.

However, while this means that there are many aspects of the core economy and culture that are familiar parts of the everyday lives of southerners, it does not mean that North and South, core and periphery, are now economically or culturally homogeneous. On the contrary, what is most characteristic of the situation is that the asymmetrical relationship between core and periphery is reproduced in some way at each stage. This asymmetry is manifested no more clearly than in the images and stereotypes of the South and southerners. Thus, with Unification, the South became classified as innately backward and uncivilised, in keeping with the evolutionary theories of the period. During Fascism no such image emerged since the 'Southern Question' was 'banned'. However, after World War II the images emerged again in a new form. This time the South was technically backward and required the application of certain measures to become 'modern'.

But it was not until the 1960's that such images began to become common currency in the everyday lives of southerners. From this time onwards, they encountered them as emigrants, in the media, in the education system etc. Consequently they have become an important part of their identity; of the way they place themselves and perceive themselves as being placed in the social world.

CHAPTER THREE

The Process of Integration at Grottaminarda

1. Introduction

Having presented a general historical picture of the process of integration and of the development of images of backwardness and modernity, it is necessary to turn to the community being studied, Grottaminarda, and to look at the way in which this process has been manifested locally: how does the town 'fit in' to this general picture?

It is not the aim of this chapter to try to present an exact local parallel of Chapter Two, using the general picture as a precise frame into which to squeeze uncomfortably all local history since Unification. While some parallels can and will be made, the aim of the previous chapter was to provide a context for, and not a model of, what happened at Grotta.

2. The 19th Century at Grottaminarda

In 1874 an official of the local courts described Grottaminarda in the following manner:

> *il villaggio è situato su d'una ondulazione di terra poco considerevole; esso è scompartito in paese vecchio e paese nuovo; il primo tutto burroni e dirupi, tanto che dicesi Fratta; il secondo circondato da comode strade, però ributtanti per lordura, del che i signori amministratori del comune ben poco si curano. Poche sono le case comode, nel resto tutte casipole.*
>
> the village is situated on an unremarkable hillock; it is divided into the old town and the new town; the first is all pot-holes and gullies, so much so that it is called 'Fratta'[1]; the second is enclosed in commodious streets in which however, the filth is disgusting and which our distinguished administrators Do extremely little to improve. There are few large houses and the remaining [habitations] are hovels.
>
> (Romano, Francesco 1874, in Palomba et al 1981: 140)

Although it is clear from the tone of this account that the author had an axe to grind with the particular local administration of the period, it can nevertheless be

[1] Dictionary definition: *"zona impervio per sterpi e pruni"* - "an area made inaccessible with thorny bushes"

inferred that living conditions in the 19th century were extremely poor. Local documented accounts of living conditions during this period tend to be somewhat general. However, there is no reason to suppose that Grotta escaped the misery that was being experienced by the rest of the South at this time.

The town grew rapidly and the 'urban' area spread to fill the gap between the mediæval *borgo* and *il castello* on the top of the hill and the *osterie* and *taverne* (inns and taverns) which had over the years sprung up along the *Regia Strada delle Puglie* (the Royal Puglian Way). for the first half of the 19th Century this road, one of the only trans-Appenine routes in the South was, as a local historian put it :

> *Percorsa da teorie di muli carichi di grano che provenivano dalla Puglia e andavano verso Napoli.*
>
> lined with processions of mules coming from Apulia and going to Naples loaded with grain.
>
> (Palomba 1980: 28)

The extreme dominance of the city of Naples over the provinces of its kingdom is well known, giving it the accolade of being "the swollen head of a stunted body" (Galasso, G. 1978: 12). As J.A. Davis puts it:

> a totally disproportionate share of the kingdom's foreign and domestic commerce was channelled into and through the city ... it was the almost exclusive centre of consumption on the mainland.
>
> (Davis J.A., 1975: 6)

The most important area of cereal production was the Adriatic coast and the plains of Apulia. Here also the grain was of the best quality. In other words then, Grottaminarda was a link albeit small in a chain which was essential to the Kingdom. But although its position made it a trading centre in its own right and gave employment to the owners of taverns and inns, as well as to carters and porters, the principal economic activity of the town was, as with most others at the time, agriculture. The vast majority of the population were peasants and land was the main economic resource. For the most part production was of grain, to a lesser extent olive oil, silk and wine. Associated with the production of these was an array of artisan trades, notably that of *bottaio* (barrel maker) for wine and oil.

Who then, was in control of the land and its produce? What was their relationship with other social classes? What was their relationship with the outside world?

In 1806, the *leggi eversivi*, the laws abolishing feudalism were passed, bringing under the jurisdiction of the *Comune* (i.e. of the State) all lands to which the feudal lord did not have the title of proprietor; and in 1809 another law suppressed religious orders and brought ecclesiastical lands under the same jurisdiction, thus getting rid of ecclesiastical privileges that made these lands inalienable.

At Grotta, the decision of the *Commissione Feudale* which put these laws into practice was passed in August of 1810 giving *il comune* title to the land to dispose of as it saw fit. The feudal lord, Raffaele Coscia, was ordered to cease exacting rent from land on which he could not prove rightful ownership (all feudal demesne having been removed from his jurisdiction). In addition he was ordered to refrain from exacting all feudal dues for whatever purpose from anyone *"Sotto pena di ducati mille"* - under the penalty of 1000 ducats (Palomba et al 1981: 110).

Subsequently the lands appropriated by the *comune* were redistributed largely among those who already rented them from the now *ex*-feudal lord. However, although those assigned land had now been freed from feudal dues of every kind, they were *not owners*, but received the land in emphyteusis (i.e. perpetual lease) and were still required to pay a tax or 'rent' known as *il canone* to the *Comune.* In most respects they were able to behave as owners - dividing the land and passing it on to their heirs but they were not permitted to sell the land and if they should fail to pay *il canone* the land would be reappropriated by *il Comune.*

In this way the *contadini* of Grotta were unable in subsequent years to expand their property and consequently it became extremely fragmented. It should be remembered however, that a great deal of land remained in the hands of the feudal lord and even more in those of the rising bourgeoisie. It is unclear from the available evidence the extent to which this *quotizzazione* (redistribution) led to the usurpation by nobles and bourgeois of the newly freed lands. According to a commissioner who came to Grotta in 1935 to sort out the land records, the anti-feudal laws:

se colpí decisamente il prepotere feudale, non portò alla misera classe dei lavoratori della terra quei benefici che essa si proponeva di far loro. Molteplici fattori, ragioni politiche, sociale, amministrativi frustrarono quasi del tutto gli scopi della legge: l'interesse privato prevalse ancora sul pubblico e nuovi signori si sostituirono ai vecchi, mutarono le forme, ma la sostanza, in buona parte, rimase quello di prima e i nuovi arrivati adottarono tutti i mezzi per garantire le ingiusti profitti tratti dal processo di liquidazione feudale.

although they hit decisively the feudal tyranny, they did not bring to the miserable peasant classes those benefits it had proposed to give them. Many factors, political, social and administrative, almost completely frustrated the aims of the law: private interest continued to prevail over public and new *signori* replaced the old; the form changed but the substance remained largely as before and the new *arrivistes* adopted all methods to guarantee their unfair profits taken from the process of liquidation of feudalism.

(Gatta, D. 1936 in Palomba 1983:125)

Unfortunately this is little more than a general statement of events that were typical in the South and reveals nothing of the particular unfolding of the process at Grottaminarda. However, it is generally agreed that the post-feudal redistributions did result in the creation, or at least the beginnings, of a small class of smallholders at Grotta and that this is one of the reasons why today, the area is one of the few in which a large proportion of *contadini* live in *case coloniche* - i.e. in houses on the land they work (c.f. Palomba, A.1983: 126; Marrone 1979: 201). Thus although it may be true that a great deal of land ended up in the hands of the wealthiest classes, a substantial number of Grottesi nevertheless became smallholders.[1]Whether this meant an improvement in their situation is another matter. The plots for more than two-thirds of those who had been assigned land were under two hectares, and in addition, the *leggi eversivi* had also abolished the *usi civici*

In this period then, land was the all-important concern for all classes, being the source of livelihood and the basis of all social relations and social positions.

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[1]c.f. Colclough who describes how the abolition of feudalism was the making of the middle-class landowners. The once-and-for-all granting of land to the peasants made no allowance for their future needs which had previously been accommodated by the flexible system of communal rights. Also they could no longer avoid the payment of taxes since the landlords were now local and not absentee. Furthermore the new middle-class was now in control of the *Comune* and since there was little interference from the state they could use communal resources for their own private gain. Thus they usurped demesne lands and concealed offences by destroying and falsifying records and gradually replaced the *nobili* by buying their lands.

By the 1870's, according to the account by Francesco Romano with which this section began, Grotta was going through a period of decline. In addition it is noticeable that there is no mention of a class of nobili in his account. Instead, in describing the population he divides them into *galantuomini* (gentry - the name generally given to the new class of landowners and professionals who emerged in the 19th Century), *operai* and *artigiani* (workers and artisans - here he seems to refer to poor town dwellers who work as day labourers in whatever jobs they can find) and *contadini* (i.e. the peasants who live in the *campagna*). Combining this account with that of another government official writing about the affairs of the town during the same period, it is possible to build up a picture of the town towards the end of the 19th Century. Indeed the fact that this picture has been created by two government officials - strangers to the town and, as we will see, none too enamoured with its ways, gives us, by default, an insight into precisely that relationship with which we are concerned.

The second official, *avvocato* Pescatore, was a *commissario prefettizio*, a delegate of the provincial Prefect's office and came to Grotta in 1871 to approve the annual budget of the local administration. This was in fact the job of the town council. However, as was frequent, disputes between factions that made up the council resulted in their failure to carry out their duty within the requisite time. The council was dissolved and replaced by the *commissario*.

While there, *avv.* Pescatore carried out a census of the population showing it to be 4769. Of this total only 179 were eligible to vote. The conditions of suffrage were based on criteria of age (25 was the age of majority), literacy (electors had to be able to read and write) and wealth (electors had to have an annual tax assessment of at least 40 Lire - in other words about 10 times as much as ordinary *contadini* paid on a *tomolo* (about an acre) of land to the *Comune* as *canone*.

Public works carried out were negligible. Pescatore found to his horror that sums of money allocated for road maintenance were simply handed over to a certain Signor Bozza without being noted in the annual budget. Thus he rebukes them:

> *Io non so su quali criteri lo Stato paghi una cifra si rilevante, ma siano qualsivogliano, è evidente che il Comune debba o profitarne esso, o farne conseguire un economia allo Stato, mai pero farne oggetto d'ingiusti guadagni per gli speculatori*
>
> I do not know according to what criteria the State might pay such a substantial sum, but whatever they might be, it is evident that the Comune must either profit from this, or help the State to save some

money, never however, make it the object of the illicit gains of speculators.

(Pescatore in Lazzaruolo et al 1980: 135)

The aforementioned Romano was also critical of Grotta's administrators in these years. Most of the town's ills and problems are put down to those *"malvagi cittadini"* - "evil citizens" - who *"con superbia pretendono essere chiamati galantuomini"* - "with arrogance aspire to be called gentlemen"(ibid: 141). His account gives some idea of the social classes that make up the community as he goes on to make these "so-called gentlemen" the object of a scathing attack :

Non fanno altro se no riunirsi sovra apposite case e quivi giocano, dicono male del prossimo, disprezzano con atti e parole financo Colui che tutto sostiene, di poi vanno alla caccia, al passeggio, stimano il cibo come cosa unica al mondo, e non di rado vedesi qualche giovinetta che sedotta da qualche piccola somma è stato da loro oltreggiata. In breve, essi amano appassionatamente il dolce far niente, non pensano punto all'educazione dei figli, i quali veri e legittimi eredi dei loro genitori si son dati anch'essi al bel tempo; vanno facendo i monelli per strada ed insultando la pace dei buoni. Oltre a ciò amano il lavoro come il diavolo l'aqua santo.

They do nothing but get together at particular houses and there they gamble, speak badly of their neighbour, despise in action and word even He who gives sustenance to everything; then they go hunting, strolling around; they love food as if it were the only thing in the world, and not infrequently does one see some girl who, seduced by a little money, has been outraged by them. In brief, they love passionately *il dolce far niente* (sweet-doing-nothing), they do not think at all of the education of their children, and the latter, true and legitimate heirs of their parents, have given themselves over to to the good time; they roam the streets acting as rogues and disturbing the peace of good folk. Above all they love work like the devil loves Holy Water.

(Romano op cit: 143)

Both authors share in common a 'civilised' recognition of the importance of public education and of progress. Romano berates them for failing to see that the purpose of education is to raise children to "use their faculties well ... to think and act honestly and correctly" so that in their future profession they might be "useful to themselves and to civil society" (ibid). Pescatore is dismayed at the closure of the local school due to lack of pupils:

La necessità di una scuola non può misurarsi del numero degli alunni che la frequentano

The need for a school cannot be measured according to the number of pupils who attend it

(Pescatore op cit: 136)

He goes on to say:

> *La scuola oggi è frequentata solo dalle classi agiate: i figli del popolo vi si son date un volontario ostracismo - perchè la gente minuto ha scuorno di mostrare i propri cenci rimpetto al sovrabbondante degli agiati - è curioso, è strano anzi sentir questo nel secolo dell'Internazionale.*
>
> The school today is frequented only by the wealthy classes: the sons of the people have decided to voluntarily ostracise themselves - the common people are ashamed to be seen in their rags face to face with the opulence of the well-to-do. Its curious, strange even, to hear this in the century of the International.
>
> (ibid)

The accounts are exaggerated and stereotypical. The authors set themselves in opposition to local *galantuomini*. However, it is perhaps precisely this stereotypical view which gives us an insight into the nature of the situation. As members of 'civilised society' and upright public officials, they despise those who would pretend to the same social position as themselves but who, in their view, have no grasp of what it means to be civilised. The cultural *distance* between these representatives of the State and the local notables is clear and although everything they say about the latter cannot be taken simply at face value, it can nevertheless be seen that the *galantuomini*, as yet, have little regard for the State or 'civil society' as represented by Romano.

These beliefs can also be seen in Romano's discussion of the other social classes at Grotta. The *operai* and *artigiani*, he says, are "intelligent but devoid of good will" (Romano, op cit: 145). They spend too much time *a spasso* - at leisure - and work only from day to day. Hence they find themselves in a miserable condition. They care not for the education of their children, sending them to school only when convenient and then as soon as the harvest starts take them out of school to the fields to assist in the work,

> *come se poi un tomolo di grano valesse più di un anno di generale cultura - sciocchi loro!*
>
> as if a bushel of wheat was worth more than a year of general culture - what fools!

The contradiction in this view which vilifies this class firstly for not working and then for choosing to work is apparent. Moreover in all likelihood those to whom Romano is referring will have been workers who were unable to obtain work *except* on a day to day basis and for whom a bushel of grain would have been vital to their survival

and education a luxury. However, the point to recognise at the moment is that again the emphasis is on education and being civilised (acquiring 'general culture').

Finally the author moves on to the *contadini* for whom he has almost nothing but praise:

> *Come son buoni quei contadini! Affettuosi, amano Iddio sopra ogni cosa; alla mattina ben per tempo balzano di letto, si spandono nelle loro campagne e quivi lavorano con costanza -Si, non si vede un contadino che al par dei galantuomini e degli operai facesse il girandolone pel paese, appena alla Domenica, poverelli.*
>
> How good they are those peasants! affectionate, loving God above all else. In the morning, very early, they jump from their beds and spread out into their fields, and there work with constance. Yes, you will not see a peasant acting like the gentry or labourers sauntering about town - except on Sundays, poor things.

Yet after discoursing in this way at great length about their qualities, he admits that while being free from the vices of the other classes the *contadini* do have their faults:

> *sono costanti nel lavoro ma contrari al progresso. Essi sono nemici dei libri, epperciò in loro non regna nessun principio di civiltà; ed è questo la ragione per cui sparlano contro nostro governo.*
>
> They are constant in work but against progress. They are enemies of books and therefore have no principle of *civiltà;* and this is the reason they speak badly of our government.
>
> (ibid: 148)

Once again the peasants end up lacking what he possesses: 'civility' and 'education'; and against what he is for: 'progress'.

The distance between the state and the periphery at this stage is apparent from these accounts. Nevertheless it must be remembered that the town was most definitely linked to the wider system even at this time. These two figures in fact exemplify the increase in officials, bureaucrats and administrators that was brought about by Unification (cf. Allum, 1973b: 52). The linkages are also apparent from Romano's references to the decline of the town. He describes the important commercial function of the town as a thing of the past and to an extent exonerates the labourers by recognising that previously they had been able to obtain work as porters for the travellers and goods that passed through the town. The reason he provides for this decline is the construction of the Naples - Foggia railway which bypassed Grotta and which rendered the Strada Regia useless.

3. The Great War and the Fascist Interlude

3.1. Into the 20th Century

The end of the 19th and the start of the 20th Centuries slightly eased the intense pressure on land as many Grottesi chose the option of emigration. Despite this however, social conditions remained very poor and worsened as the century unfolded.

The streets and houses were without water, drains or sewage facilities and waste was thrown into the streets:

> *le strade di paese, polverose d'estate e fiumare d'inverno, si riempivano, specie durante la notte, di rifiuti di qualsiasi genere ed erano focolai continui di epidemie*
>
> the streets of the town, dusty in summer, like rivers in winter, filled up with waste of all kinds especially during the night and they were continual hotbeds of disease
>
> (Palomba 1983: 10)

On the western outskirts of the built up area a small valley had become:

> *un pubblico letamaio, deposito si immondizie, di resti umani, e di quanti più putrivo vi possa esistere, di cui esalgono miasmi pestiferi ed ammorbenti e ciò a danno della decenza, dell'igiene e della salute pubblica.*
>
> a public dungheap, depository of filth of human waste and of the most putrid substances that could exist, from which emanate pestiferous and fetid clouds that are a threat to decency, hygiene and public health.
>
> (doctors report in ibid: 17)

In fact outbreaks of disease were quite common in these years. Public fountains were often blocked and the water stagnant, thus increasing the danger and frequency of typhoid and cholera. Tuberculosis was also common and the attempts of the Town Council to set up a *lazaretto* for the infected and to appease the local fear of contagion are recorded in the minutes of a meeting in 1914. However, the initial choice of site proved unsuitable being infested with malaria.

The years of the Great War worsened this situation as many Grottesi were called up to fight for their nation. In October 1918 the epidemic of Spanish influenza (that hit all Italy, and because of which "as many Italians died ... as were killed in the whole war" [Clark, M. 1984: 201]) raised the monthly mortality rate in Grotta from under 10 (in a population of 5904), to 48 - and 20 of these were infants under the age of ten.

Following this the years 1919-20 brought to Grotta the same crisis, and consequent unrest that was being experienced nationwide. During these post-war years, bread, pasta and grain were rationed and at Grotta for a period of 3 consecutive months during 1920, no rations were supplied. When they finally arrived there was only sufficient for half of each family's entitlement. Here is how the situation was described by a provincial newspaper of the time:

> *Per il malgoverno a cui questo sindaco, il signor Morelli, ha sottoposto la tranquilla e laboriosa popolazione di questa comune, scoppiò un tumulto: causa fu la scarsa approvvigionamento dei generi alimentari, specialmente del grano e del pane cagionato per incuria e incapacità del sindaco, che per giunta non ha saputo mai procedere correttamente ed imparzialmente nella distribuzione di tali generi: un migliao e piu di persone improvvisò una dimostrazione ostile al detto sindaco, reclamando le dimissioni*
>
> Because of the misgovernment to which this sindaco has subjected the peaceful and hard working population of this *comune*,a tumult broke out: the cause was the poor supply of foodstuffs especially grain and bread occasioned by the neglect and incapacity of the mayor, who, into the bargain has never understood how to proceed correctly and impartially in the distribution of these goods: a thousand and more persons staged a spontaneous and hostile demonstration against the mayor, demanding his resignation.
>
> (Irpinia Avanti Aug 1st 1920)

The event resulted in a court case against those who had led the demonstration and some of the statements of those involved are revealing of the prevailing social and political situation.

According to the mayor, the demonstration had been the work of the local *circolo operaio* (workers club) which had recently been set up and he urged the government to resolve the dispute before the populace turned to bolshevism (ibid: 51). In this he was expressing fears common among the bourgeoisie at this time in the face of social unrest and the beginnings of Socialist organisation in the South. That such organisation existed, at least to an extent, is evident from the existence of the newspaper quoted from above - a provincial version of the main organ of the Italian Socialist Party, *Avanti!*.

According to the accused, the *sindaco* had himself suggested that they should stage a demonstration in order to impress upon the provincial authorities the urgency of the problem. However the violence with which the protest was made (the Town Hall was occupied, the *sindaco* threatened and a *Carabiniere* assaulted) showed that it was more than a mere stage act.

It emerged that the principal reason for the event was neither ideological nor pragmatic, but simply a spontaneous reaction to the genuine problem of lack of bread. In other words, the kind of protest that had been characteristic of the South for years - non-revolutionary; the putting into practice of the maxim that "it was the ruler's duty to provide the people with a living and if he did not they rioted until he did" (Allum 1973: 97).

If we reflect at this stage on the nature of Grotta's links with the 'core', it can be seen that a great many changes have occurred. There is an increased awareness of national identity following the Great War. Eighty Grottesi had been killed and many others injured, and a war memorial was commissioned and erected in their name. In addition the minutes of council meetings at the time reveals an increased involvement with the State. There are increasing requests for loans from the *Cassa Depositi e Prestiti* (State Loan Agency) for improvements to infrastructure (roads, drains, water supply, electricity). A loan was requested in 1921 for the construction of the first school building so that the town could comply with new laws requiring compulsory education at all five primary levels. Up until then it had only been possible to take children to third level and classes were not in an official school building. Those who wished to educate their children beyond this level had to send them to larger towns or to the provincial capital. This of course, was only possible or indeed desired by the gentry.

In addition we have seen in the example of the demonstration, the beginnings at least of party political activity - if only manifested in the existence of the left-wing newspaper and the local *circolo operaio*. However, for the majority of the population, consisting of peasants and artisans, everyday life was quite distant from the state and from ideas about socialism, or indeed, any other political ideology.

Requests for money from the State were largely, if not entirely, the concern of the local gentry - the leading families installed in power in the local administration. funds for public works, although still limited, continued to be appropriated by those in control of the local administration. Also in their control were the allocation of communal land, taxation levels on land and property, and access to other resources.

It was a common occurrence - even until quite recently - for local wealthy landowners to come to an agreement with those in power at the *Comune* that their land tax would be kept low. If the law prevented this from happening the law would be evaded. The lists of those who should pay on what land would be left out of date and the demands

to have them updated frustrated by stalling and delaying. As pointed out in Chapter Two, politicians higher up the ladder turned a blind eye to avoid alienating their electors. Hence, competition for control of the *Comune* was a matter of fierce rivalry between leading notable families.

This is reflected in the elections of 1920, the last administrative elections before the advent of Fascism. The previous year, suffrage had been extended to all males over the age of 21 and all those under 21 who had served in the army. However, despite this extended franchise votes were still largely controlled by the elite families in their position as patrons to the rest of the population.

Two lists of candidates were presented to the electorate, consisting almost entirely of landowners and professionals. Each of the lists was formed solely for the purposes of the election and had no affiliation with any political party. Rather they were identified by symbols. The winning list was called *grappola d'uva* (bunch of grapes) and this was the symbol presented on the voting card. The losing list was known as *orologio* (clock). apart from anything else this use of symbols was necessary since the majority of voters were now illiterate.

The *capolista* or leader of the *grappola d'uva* faction, who subsequently became *sindaco* was Antonio Baldassare or *don* Totò, a landowner and lawyer. His family had come to Grotta in the late 19th Century as *esattori delle imposte*- tax collectors. This job of 'tax farming' was carried out by private contractors who took a percentage of the taxes collected. It was an extremely lucrative business and thus the Baldassare family quickly established itself at Grotta. It was also very costly to the State and to the individual *comuni*, yet was set up in this way because there were not enough resources to introduce a public collection system. *Don* Totò's rival was Giuseppe Romano or *don Peppe* who was a local doctor and whose family also ran the town's only chemist shop.

Support for these families was based to an extent on the division between town and country. Most of don Totò's list were landowners, while that of *don* Peppe had a greater proportion of professionals: doctors, lawyers, the school teacher and even one or two *commercianti.* However, this should not be overemphasised since almost all the candidates were members of the local elite. Men voted for them as prestigious and powerful individuals. They were to retain their position as Fascism established itself.

3.2. The Rise of Fascism at Grottaminarda

Contrary to what was said above the *circolo operaio* and the provincial Socialist newspaper were not in fact the only local manifestations of party political activity at the time. In addition to these there were a substantial number of supporters of Mussolini in the town around 1921. Most of them were young and unemployed. They formed a local section of the National Fascist Party (PNF), wore black shirts and carried truncheons. They became the local *squadristi*. However, although they were said to have molested supporters of socialism, they were not involved in any serious event of the kind that occurred elsewhere, (attacks on socialist headquarters, beatings and shootings etc.).

As Fascism began to make its mark at the national level however, and Mussolini came to power, the local notables at Grotta, led by the example of the particular ministers and deputies that they supported in parliament, jumped on the Fascist bandwagon, recognising that sticking to the source of political power enabled them to retain their position. The PNF branch set up by the young *squadristi* , condescendingly referred to in a Fascist provincial newspaper as being of 'good will' but 'unable to attract many adherents' (Irpinia Fascista 30.6.23), was dissolved by the Provincial Federation of the Party and a trio of local *signori* were put in its place and given a mandate to enlarge the base of the party.

Immediately other notables took up membership and assemblies and rallies were organised in support of the new regime and its leader, Mussolini. Included among these recruits were the newly elected *sindaco,don* Totò, and Pasquale Romano the brother of his rival *don* Peppe

Don Totò took every opportunity to ingratiate himself with the regime. Several times from 1922-27 the Town Council was convened by him to express the 'people's' support for Mussolini. They congratulated *il Duce* on winning the elections of 1924 and expressed *piena approvazione* (full approval) for, and *illimitata devozione* (unlimited devotion) to, Fascism. On another occasion they conferred upon him the honorary citizenship of the town. Then, when an attempt was made on his life in 1925, a telegram was sent expressing the town's outrage. This was recorded in the minutes of the Consiglio:

questo momento arrivo giornali, apprendesi scampato pericolo Vostra Eccellenza. Nome cittadinanza pongole vivissime felicitazioni, deprecando insano tentativo di ferire l'onore della Patria in persona sacra del suo nobilissimo Duce. Ossequi, Sindaco Baldassare

Newspapers just arrived, informed of averted danger to Your Excellency. In name of citizens most lively felicitations, condemning insane attempt to injure the honour of the nation in the sacred person of Your most noble *Duce*. In homage, *Sindaco* Baldassare
(D.C.C. Nov. 1925)

In this way don Totò paved the way for his own nomination as *podestà* in 1927. His eventual appointment was recorded in a popular verse which brings out the local significance of the event:

E adesso il dittatore
ha fatto il podestà.
Piange qualche dottore
per gelosia di Totò.

And now the Dictator,
has elected a *podestà*.
A certain doctor is weeping
in envy of Totò
(quoted in Palomba 1983: 73)

The 'certain doctor' was of course *don* Peppe, who now had no chance of obtaining such a position. However, he was not completely isolated since his brother Pasquale became *Segretario del Fascio* - Secretary of the local section of the Party, a position equally, if not more important than that of *podestà*. Thus amid the new structures of the regime, the old rivalries went on.

As well as the setting up of the Fascio which (which brought mass party-political organisation to the town for the first time) and installing the *podestà*, there was a whole spectrum of other Fascist organisations, institutions and influences. The *Ente Comunale di Assistenza* (ECA) or 'poor relief agency' was instituted in 1927 although it did not have its own premises until 1939. Also in 1927, the *comune* registered with the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* - a recreational organisation for young people from the ages of 8-14. Its aim was to instil in them nationalistic and bellicose sentiments through the promotion of physical strength and fitness.

In addition there were the *Opera Nazionale contro l'Analfabetismo* (campaign against illiteracy); the *Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia* which provided care, assistance and education for the children of poor families; the *dopolavoro* or 'afterwork'

club for workers which provided, once again an environment in which Fascist propaganda could be disseminated. From Grotta's *dopolavoro* came, among other things, a town band which was financed by the *Comune* for *"le celebrazioni delle diverse ricorrenze patriottiche"* - the celebration of the various patriotic festivals (D.P. 3.5.37). The various categories of occupation were grouped into *associazioni sindacali* (unions) which were all Fascist and organised under the jurisdiction of the *segretario del fascio.* The *Federconsorzi* (Federation of Agricultural Consortia) was taken over by the regime as the national organisation for the stockpiling and distribution of grain. And there was an organisation of women, the *fascio femminile* which was very active in the town.

The visible presence of Fascism was also constantly maintained in plaques and inscriptions on walls; people wearing insignia and uniforms, grafitti on buildings. Every town had to have a street called *Via Roma* in remembrance of their Roman origins. Later, at Grotta another street was named after Marconi. In all of these things, Grotta was no different from any other town and in this way the influence of the regime was extended to all activities from the political and administrative to the economic and cultural.

The main economic campaign of *il duce* - the *Battaglia del grano* together with the ruralisation programme, had far-reaching effects on Grottaminarda and indeed on the whole of the province of Avellino.

Agricultural experts travelled round the Grottesi countryside, instructing peasants in methods of producing more grain and festivals, and rallies were held to celebrate the project and give prizes to its most fervent and successful adherents. In the province of Avellino, production doubled in the decade after 1924 (Palomba op. cit.: 67)

At all of these festivals and gatherings which took place both in individual *comuni* and in Avellino town, the provincial capital, the *'masse rurali'* (rural masses) would be present, dressed in their 'traditional' peasant costumes. In addition, members of the local and provincial Fascist authorities would address the crowd with demagogic proclamations of the great contribution of Grotta or the province to Mussolini's great plan and declarations of dedication to *il Duce.* At Grotta in 1942, the provincial *gerarca* (Fascist Party leader)praised the local people for their spirit of dedication in the task of growing more grain for the nation to secure its inevitable victory in the war. A symbolic fascio (bundle or sheaf) of grain was then presented to him by a young peasant girl saying:

Questo grano è per Voi; tutto il grano è per il duce e per la patria

This wheat is for you; all the wheat is for *il duce* and for the Nation

(*Corriere dell'Irpinia* July 1942)

The ruralisation programme with its restrictions on emigration and measures to encourage large families had widespread effect at Grotta. From 1921-31, the population rose from 5 904 to 6 503 and by 1936 it had risen again to 7 014. Yet from 1911-21, when natural increase was curtailed by emigration, the increase was only from 5 852 to 5 904 (CCIAA 1964: 103).

In 1935, the *podestà* and the *segretario del fascio* of Grotta were called to a meeting in Avellino together with all the other *podestà* and *segretari* of the Province and the rest of the provincial fascist hierarchy to organise,

opportuni e concreti provvedimenti per incrementare la razza irpina

suitable and concrete measures for the increase of the Irpinian race
(*delibere podestarile* 3.4.1935)

These measures consisted of (i)*premi di nuzialità e di natalità* (marriage and birth prizes) to be given to young and needy couples who married early and to families with large numbers of children, with the prize increasing with the size of family; (ii) the institution of a *Unione fascista delle famiglie numerose* (Fascist Union of Large Families) consisting of poor families with many children who were given a *"tessera di benemerenza"* (certificate of merit) which entitled them to free medical assistance (medicines etc.) ; and (iii) the institution of a festival on Christmas Eve called *Giornata della madre e del Fanciullo* (Mother and Child Day) on which prizes were given to needy mothers with more than five children who attended *"con diligenza e zelo"* (with diligence and zeal) the *consultorio dell'Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia.* The names of those given prizes were listed in the *delibere podestarile* of each year from 1935 until the end of the regime.

These positive incentives were combined with negative sanctions on those who did not contribute to the success of *il duce's* demographic strategy. Men who remained unmarried were required to pay the *imposta sul celibato* or celibacy tax. One of the casualties of this was *don* Totò, who was also forced by the authorities to resign his position as *podestà*, being deemed unfit for office on these grounds. Hence we see here the influence of the party, as opposed to personal influence and prestige.

It can be seen then that the regime had a deep influence on local society with Fascist structures and ideology making their mark in all contexts. At the same time, as mentioned, it is necessary to recognise the many continuities from the previous stage and the fact that existing social relations were in many ways entrenched.

The first evidence in this respect is the testimony of Osvaldo Sanini, a socialist writer and poet from northern Italy who, like Carlo Levi, was confined to the South for his literary activities which were deemed to be anti-Fascist. Although he was not exactly an impartial observer, his observations on Grotta during this period nevertheless give an insight into a different local reality from that described above.

Sanini continued to criticise the regime throughout his confinement in poetry and other writings, reserving particular venom for its obsequious local representatives. Coming from a culture (northern Italy) which regarded political persuasion as an ideological choice rather than an instrumental necessity, he had no sympathy for the clientelistic system he found at Grotta. He satirises what he sees as their hypocrisy in switching to become fascists in order to maintain their privileged position and juxtaposes their jingoistic and fervent rhetoric with their less than fervent actions or with the miserable reality in which the poor majority were living. In one poem, the efforts of ECA (*Ente Comunale di Assistenza* - Poor Relief Institute) to relieve the misery of the poor are satirised:

Lodato il Fascio sia che cura e agruppa
le giovenezze de la Nazione
e ne le membra gracili sviluppa
una muscolatura da leone

A tal uopo ne l'ECA ad una truppa
di tappinelli per colazione
quotidiana vien data una zuppa
fatta d'aqua e di qualche maccherone

Non più le malattie, non più la tisi!
con tal sostanzioso nutrimento
rosea salute fiorirà sui visi

E un formidabil uomo atto a la guerra
diverrà ciascun bimbo macilente
sfidante Russia, America e Inghilterra

Praise to the Fascio that cares for and groups
the Youth of the Nation
And in their graceful limbs develops
the muscles of a lion.

To that end in ECA to a troop
of little wretches for their meal
each day is given, a soup
that's made of water and a hint of macaroni.

No more illness, no more TB
with such substantial nourishment
rosy health will flourish in their faces

And a formidable man, ready for war
Will each malnourished child become
Defiant before Russia, America and England.
(Sanini, O. 1979: 150)

In another poem, the object of Sanini's attack is the *ammassatore del grano* (the grain collector):

Tutto animato da profona fede
per la grande vittoria, di farina
pur l'affamato popolo provvede

Con senso patriottico e morale
ei vende appena la derrata fina
quindici volte il prezzo suo normale

All animated with faith profound
in the great victory, with flour
he even provides the starving population

With his patriotic and moral sense
he sells them only the finest flour
fifteen times its normal price
(ibid: 148)

In this case Sanini was pointing up a situation which other observers have described for South Italy and which some Grottese described to me albeit in very general terms; a situation in which a restricted and closely knit group of notables controlled access to all the important local resources or as it was put by Grottesi, the *'spartizione del bottino'* - the division of the spoils. The *ammassatore* was an extremely important member of this group, having access to the principal means of everyday sustenance, and he generally made sure that all the needs of everyone who mattered - the members of the Fascio, the school teacher, chemist, the health official, the miller together with certain lawyers, creditors and landowners - were supplied in a system of bribes and favours. As the poem implies, ordinary people had to pay highly if they wanted any supplies. At the same time, as Marrone points out for other towns of Irpinia, they were forced to adhere to the consignment regulations (Marrone 1979: 122).

The actions of Euplio Vitale, a landed notable of this period, are further testimony to the different local reality from that implied above. Vitale was a lawyer and notary who, over the years had acquired substantial lands mainly by appropriating the property of peasants who could not afford to pay the usurious interest rates on his credit. Eventually in 1937 he was imprisoned for usury. Prior to this however, he occupied, at various times, both the most important offices of the regime - *Segretario del Fascio* and *Podestà*, while at the same time being one of the main creditors, not just of the peasantry, but of the *Comune* itself, helping to finance, at high interest, various public works. Moreover, he benefitted doubly from this arrangement since often the 'public' works he financed were for his own private interest. Improvements to the drainage system or water supply or street paving, would, for example, benefit his own property.

The ideological adherence of ordinary people to the regime is also a matter of debate. In 1935 Italy was at war in Ethiopia and the provincial newspaper the *Corriere dell'Irpinia* spoke of the huge number of volunteers who had joined up from the province, revealing

> *il clima di fede e di virile entusiasmo in cui vive oggi l'Italia di Mussolini.*
>
> The climate of faith and virile enthusiasm in which today, Mussolini's Italy lives.
>
> (Corriere dell'Irpinia 16.3.1935)

Many Grottesi joined this campaign and showed me photographs of themselves or of relatives in Africa or leaving to go there with banners carrying Fascist slogans like *"Col Duce si vince"* "With *il Duce*, we will win". However, by most accounts the reasons for volunteering were less to do with 'faith and enthusiasm' than with the fact that the pay was better than anything that could be earned locally. A local verse of the same period goes as follows:

> *Io parto pe' la guerra*
> *Chi con me si vuol marita'*
> *due lire al giorno*
> *di sussidio avrà*
>
> I am leaving for the war
> Whoever wants to marry me
> Two *lire* a day
> of pay will obtain
>
> (quoted in Palomba 1983: 117)

As a result of this important economic factor there was a great deal of competition to be accepted as a volunteer. In this respect the young men of Grotta were 'lucky' in having the figure of Emilio Perillo, a member of the local elite and an officer in the Fascist militia, to assist the progress of their applications. In many ways Perillo was the archetypal patron. He lived outside the community but maintained close links with its members and for many of them he was one of the few links they had with the 'outside world'. As the local historian puts it

> *a lui i cittadini grottesi facevano capo, ogni qualvolta si recavano in Avellino per necessità di vita ed egli, sempre gentile, si metteva sempre a disposizione di tutti, aiutando tutti nei limiti del possibile.*
>
> The citizens of Grotta made him their 'leader' every time they found themselves in Avellino for life's necessities, and always polite and gentlemanly, he put himself at everyone's disposition, helping everyone within the bounds of possibility.
> (Palomba 1983: 118)

He was thus held in great esteem and was able to strengthen his influence as a patron by using his position in the Fascist hierarchy. People could not understand it when, at the fall of Fascism, he was imprisoned, and on his release two years later he was greeted by a large crowd and the town band - again not for any ideological support for what he had represented as a member of the Fascist Militia, but in recognition of his personal esteem and influence.

Further chinks in the armour of nationalistic consensus that the regime sought to impose are evidenced by the fact that amidst the rhetoric of the *Battaglia del Grano*, the peasants' contributions to the *ammassi* dwindled - simply because they had barely enough grain for their own consumption. The authorities used the Church to exhort the peasants to comply and in 1942 the bishop of Avellino addressed all the priests of the diocese urging them to impress upon each peasant the necessity of becoming *"un apostolo di quest'opera squisitamente cristiana e del più alto valore patriottico"* - "an apostle of this exquisitely Christian and highly patriotic action".

3.3 Summary

Overall, the evidence tends to suggest that political expediency or economic necessity and a desire for a 'quiet life' (depending upon one's social position) were the dominant considerations in the way in which Grottesi dealt with the regime. Most of the examples indicate that neither people's attachment nor their opposition or resistance to

Fascism was ideological - they neither actively agreed with Mussolini's propaganda, nor, like Sanini, opposed it. Rather, their concerns remained largely local. The relationship between Grotta and the national core during this period continued to be a distant one.

At the same time this should not lead us to neglect the changes that *were* brought about. Even if in many respects they occurred at an formal-institutional level and in practice had limited effect on existing social relationships, nevertheless, the basis for a new relationship with the core was laid and was to evolve in the post-war period. The local elite became answerable to a provincial and national hierarchy and the spread of party organisation meant that authority could come from position within the party rather than from personal prestige. This was obtainable by anyone, even if, as we have seen, the Grottesi *notabili* were quick to monopolise the most important offices locally.

Moreover, even if the propaganda was not accepted wholesale, it was nevertheless persistent and intense and although its effects are difficult to gauge, it undoubtedly increased the awareness of ordinary peasants of 'the nation' and of a much wider arena.

4. Post-war Changes at Grotta: 1945-60

4.1. Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Two, it is with the post-war period that we enter the '3rd stage of integration'. Participation in the core ceases to be the preserve of a privileged elite and communities become 'opened up' to core culture. However, at the outset, this was a slow process and it is for this reason that this final stage has been divided into two phases. In this section we will see the gradual erosion of the monopoly that the traditional elite families had held on links with the 'outside world' and the gradual increase in the influence of the state in local affairs.

4.2. The Fall of Fascism and the Post-war Crisis at Grotta

On the 29th September, 1943, the Allies arrived in Grotta, 21 days after the announcement of the armistice. Their arrival was greeted with great celebration and people began to remove all traces of Fascism from the town, destroying sculptures and plaques, getting rid of grafitti and burning in the streets all the books, literature and propaganda held in the *Fascio* or *dopolavoro*. The Allies set up a provisional local administration supposed to consist of local leaders not compromised with the regime. There were few who fell into this category and in the first instance, an old landowner who

had not served in any official capacity but who had been a councillor prior to Fascism, was appointed as *sindaco*. However, it was not long before his administration was replaced by a *Commissario Prefettizio* who was in fact a local notable who had served as vice-podestà.

The prominent Fascists among the local elite had barricaded themselves in a house in the countryside and with the arrival of the Americans they fled, it is said, taking with them a mule and a machine gun. However, they were pursued less because they were Fascist than because they could be held responsible for the existing situation. It made little difference to the Allies that there was once again a 'changing of the guard' with the same elite families taking power again. Indeed there was more concern in the town about the behaviour of the Allied soldiers, particularly the French who, it is said, were continually drunk and insulted the honour of many families by attempting to seduce their women.

At Grotta there was no organised or concerted protest against the Fascist ex-leaders (c.f. Marrone 1979: 118 for a description of an insurrection at Calitri, a town not far from Grotta). Sanini, the most active anti-Fascist in the town, was 70 by the time the regime ended. More immediate than such machinations was the general state of crisis that had been developing since 1940 and which was accentuated by the end of the war.

The basic necessities were scarce and rationing and the malfunctioning of the *ammasso* had led to much black market trade. As a result of its position on the main Naples-Foggia road, Grotta became a centre for this trade:

> *un crogiuolo di gente di qualsiasi specie, pronto a tutto, pur di rifornirsi di viveri*
>
> a crucible of people of all kinds, ready for anything, just to obtain supplies of victuals
>
> (Palomba 1983: 143)

Consequently, there was also a great deal of crime and violence, accentuated by the lifting of restrictions on movement. People recounting these times speak of the town as a dangerous place and of particular tracts of road as *'zone calde'* - 'hot zones', where traders and merchants, legitimate and otherwise were liable to be attacked and robbed of their goods. It was largely by these means rather than by organised protest and land occupations, that the Grottesi dealt with the crisis.

4.3. Signs of change

4.3.1. New Political Alignments Among the Grottesi *Notabilato*

In this state of crisis, and as the country as a whole began the process of reconstruction, Grotta entered the third 'stage of integration'. Although, as mentioned the main force of change came after 1960, between 1945 and 1960 there were a great many developments which paved the way for the subsequent transformation of the town.

This is reflected in the political arena at Grotta where the shift from *clientelismo de notabili* to *clientelismo del partito*, and the concomitant involvement of the state, is evident. In the elections of 1946 - the first since don Totò became sindaco in 1920 - three lists of candidates were presented to the electorate which now included women.

One of these lists was led by don Tommaso Bianco, a lawyer whose father, a doctor, had been considered as the town's last real *'signore feudale'* - a traditional old-style patron. Significantly this list fared worst in this and subsequent elections in the 40's and 50's. His was a traditional elite family, which had as yet failed to adapt to the town's changing relationship with the core and particularly with the state. In later years his descendants would find a niche within the DC. However, for the time being, the Bianco family faded into the background of the Grottesi political scene.

The struggle for power was keener and more intense between the other two lists. The first of these was led by the Vitale family whose main protagonist and *capolista* was don Achille, a lawyer and landowner and nephew of the usurious Euplio encountered earlier. He was to become one of the main characters on the political scene throughout the 1950's together with his cousin don Nicola Vitale, another lawyer. They were important notables in their own right and could command the respect and support of local people by virtue of their taken for granted position as members of the elite.

This was also true of the leader of the last coalition of candidates - *avvocato* Antonio Romano, nephew of don Peppe Romano. He was an esteemed lawyer and had held office as *podestà* during the final years of Fascism. His cousin don Aristide was also in this list and owned one of the two pharmacies in the town. Control of the administration gave them among other things, control of the lucrative communal free medicine service which was financed by the state. The Romano family was thus able to spread a wide net of relatives, friends and clients.

What was significant about these two lists was that the families involved were quicker to adapt to the new post-war situation. Don Nicola was closely involved with one of the most important institutions of the post-war state - the *Coldiretti* or National Confederation of Direct Cultivators, an agricultural union set up in 1944 as the Christian Democrat alternative to the Communist *'Federterra'* and the rich landowners association, *'Confagricoltura'*. It was immensely successful in rallying the mass support of the peasantry. Like the DC it did so by absorbing local notabili as its leaders, together with their political methods *and* by monopolising the services of the Federconsorzi, an organisation that provided peasants with credit, information, practical assistance (see Rossi-Doria 1963 for a full discussion). Involvement with the Coldiretti gave don Nicola access to control over the distribution of these essential services.

For its part the Romano family campaigned as Christian Democrats, making this the first time a party political list was presented at Grotta. Clearly it was still, like the others, a coalition of notabilli. However, its members recognised in the emergence of the DC the best possibility of preserving their traditionally held privileges.

Don Antonio's list indeed won the elections and under the majority system took sixteen of the twenty seats on the local council. Yet despite this important change, the shift to 'party clientelism' in fact proceeded slowly. Support for the DC was shortlived. Later the same year the Romano family shifted its allegiance to the *Partito Nazionale Monarchico* (PNM) or Monarchist Party. This followed the 1946 referendum in which the monarchy was defeated but scored a huge victory in Naples and its hinterland.

Grotta then mirrored a tendency which saw the rise to power in Naples of the shipping magnate Achille Lauro[1] and in the political elections of 1948, more than 40% of Grottesi voted for the monarchists. But this was less to do with Lauro than to the presence in the leadership of the party of Alfredo Covelli, a notable from the town of Bonito, just a few kilometres from Grotta. Covelli was part of a tendency which sought to preserve southern landed interests which they saw as being attacked by the DC proposals for reform in agriculture (Allum, P. 1973b: 286-7).

Unlike the elite in areas of extensive latifondo, people like the Romano family did not have significant landed interests. Rather they simply sought to preserve their position of influence and privilege by aligning themselves with an influential and

[1]See Allum 1973b for a detailed account.

prestigious individual. In doing so however, they associated themselves not with the emerging elite tied to Christian Democracy but with the declining forces of traditional landed interests perhaps more clearly embodied in the figure of don Tommaso.

Thus throughout the 1950's, the 'monarchists' (i.e. the Romano family) vied with the 'independent' faction led by don Achille for control of the local administration, hence perpetuating the traditional *lotta tra famiglie* (family struggle) for power. They remained tied to older forms of patronage and despite Fascism, were not accustomed to the existence of political parties and other state agencies organised on a mass basis and with institutional structures at the local level. They were not the professional politicians that we will see emerging later, but were members of an established elite and took up office in the local administration or other agencies as if by natural right.

4.3.2. Land Reform, the Cassa and Emigration

In 1950 the *Consorzio Bonifica Ufita* (CBU)- the agency with responsibility for implementing the Land Reform laws in the Ufita Valley - was set up, with its main office at Grotta. Its catchment area included twenty-seven towns in the Ufita river basin. Don Antonio was elected as its first president and his cousin don Aristide became *sindaco*. There was much discussion in the local press at the time of a *"grandiosa opera di bonifica"* "a magnificent land improvement scheme", which would make the valley a rich and fertile plain (*Corriere dell'Irpinia* 1947-50).

Senior politicians visited the town on the occasion of the opening of the CBU and made further grand vote-capturing statements about the progress that was only round the corner (ibid: 5.5.1950). However, throughout the 1950's very little work was in fact carried out. This led to appeals for the process to be speeded up as well as to accusations and insinuations of misappropriation of funds. Left wing newspapers listed public works that had been planned and financed but not carried out (*Cronache Irpine* 1956). Despite the slowness of the process, changes were under way. Even where the work was not carried out there was now an expectation and a demand that certain public works be carried out, that progress be achieved.

The flow of emigrants also began to rise in the late 1940's and preparation classes for prospective emigrants were advertised in the provincial newspapers. Also published were extracts from speeches by the Prime Minister encouraging people to emigrate for the good of the nation and praising them for their sacrifice for the sake of their *"dolcissima patria, che non dovete mai dimenticare"* - "sweet homeland, which you must never forget" (Corriere dell'Irpinia 12.5.49).

By 1950, the number of emigrants was not thought to merit particular attention at the time. In a survey of the Province, the Chamber of Commerce in 1952 noted briefly, but without alarm, that the 9 000 emigrants who had left in the past two years, had had a notable effect on the population (Camera di Commercio 1952: 6-7). Nevertheless, the flow which was to reach massive proportions and cause great alarm at local and national level, had begun.

4.3.3. Grotta and Images of the South in the 1950's

While stressing once again that it was not until the onset of the 'economic miracle' that the images of the South as backward became part of the ordinary lives of people at Grotta, it is also necessary to recognise that such images were not wholly absent from the local scene. Indeed they appeared in the local and provincial newspapers in tandem with the optimistic declarations about progress and the pessimistic accusations about the lack of it. Such newspapers did not have a wide circulation, not least because a third of the population over the age of six in 1951 were illiterate.

In the Corriere dell'Irpinia there are many examples of an awareness of the region's position vis-a-vis the North; of the representation of the South and of southerners as backward; and of their own identity as southerners. In an editorial on the Southern Question in 1954, the paper states:

> *Esiste un problema meridionale in tutti i campi dell'attività pratica, ma il più scottante, che determina inciampi, ritardi e addirittura ostacoli insormontabili nella intrapresa delle iniziative è uno solo: la mentalità meridionale. Il Sud è in ritardo perchè i meridionali non hanno la capacità organizativa e lo spirito pratico e attivo del popolo del Nord ... Se non si diventa meno miopi, se non si muta in meglio il modo di pensare e di agire veramente da "terroni" o "sudici" (come fanno bene a chiamarci quelli di lassù), se non si apprende a vivere più degnamente nel consorzio umano, a sopportare e ammettere che un altro sia migliore di noi o sappia fare meglio di noi, qualsiasi attuazione in campo pratico resterà solo un lavoro alla superficie*
>
> There exists a southern problem in all fields of practical activity, but the most burning issue which causes stumbling blocks, delays or even insurmountable obstacles in the taking up of initiatives is this alone: the southern mentality. The South is backward because southerners do not have the organisational capacity and the practical and active spirit of the people of the North ... If we do not become less myopic, if we do not change for the better our way of

> thinking like *'terroni'* or *sudici'* [1](as they do well to call us up there), if we do not learn to live more worthily in human society, to accept and admit that someone else might be better than us, or might know how to do better than us, whatever practical measures are put into effect will remain merely superficial.
>
> (Corriere dell'Irpinia 12.6.54)

Thus the editors recognise, as part of their own identity, the representation of the South as backward, and of southerners as lazy, selfish and lacking in initiative. In doing so however, they are distancing themselves from that representation and associating themselves with those who seek to condemn stereotypically southern attitudes. This becomes apparent in the next paragraph when these attitudes are shown to be those of the *paesi di montagna* - the mountain villages:

> *Il Meridione è la terra dove ancora nei paesi di montagna la donna lavora come un asino venti ore su ventiquattro e il marito passa mezza giornata nella piazza del paese con gli amici e l'altra al caffé o nelle bettole, beatamente beandosi dal suo ozio, nella sua perfetta, chiamiamola, incoscienza, che è solo invece il più stolto e dannoso egoismo.*
>
> The South is the place where still, in the mountain villages, the woman works like an ass twenty hours a day and her husband spends half the day in the town square with his friends and the other half in the café or taverns, blissfully delighting in his indolence, in his perfect,lets call it, lack of consciousness that is rather the most foolish and dangerous egoism.
>
> (ibid)

Thus according to this speaker, the northerners correctly disparage and condemn 'us' as backward - but not because he himself possesses the egoism (and barbarism - the women are treated as beasts of burden) of the southerners. Rather it is because the mountain villagers do. The implication is then, that he (and his readers presumably) has advanced to a stage where he has acquired at least a modicum of 'civility' and is held back from advancing any further by his myopic fellows form the mountains.

There is little evidence of the existence of this kind of imagery in Grotta itself during this period. While past minutes of council meetings reveal a concern with civility and incivility in relation to neighbouring towns, this is not formulated in the context of North-South relations. Thus it was only really at the provincial level and among a certain stratum of society that such images appeared.

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[1]The former is a derogatory term for peasant; the latter is a play on words equating 'southerner' with 'dirty person'. See Chapter Two or glossary for an exact definition of the terms.

5. Earthquakes Seismic and Social: the 'Economic Miracle' at Grotta.

5.1. Introduction.

In the early 1960's Grottaminarda was carried decisively into the third 'stage of integration'. This was the period of the economic miracle: the shift in state policy from pre-industrialisation and protection of existing social relations to development by poles and the disruption of local society; large scale emigration; the increasing importance and availability of education. The way in which these processes manifested themselves at Grotta was not clear cut.

5.2. Demographic Change and the Economy

The earthquake of 1962, marked a turning point in the fortunes of the town. The *centro storico*, ruined, was abandoned and many people moved into prefabs and mobile homes. Eventually and gradually new housing began to spring up over a wide area.

Population statistics belie the actual change that was occurring. Numbers remained stable while neighbouring towns suffered decimation as people emigrated. From 1951-71 there was a decline of only some 5% as compared with 47% in, for example, Savignano Irpino(CCIAA 1973). However, it is not necessary to look much further to find that there were in fact huge demographic changes in Grotta at this time - accompanying the seismic earthquake there was a much more powerful and significant social earthquake taking place with an exodus from the land and from the town.

The decline in numbers involved in agriculture continued to such an extent that by 1971 only 36% (as compared with 76% in 1951) of the active population were still employed in this sector(CCIAA 1975). Yet even these numbers belie the extent of the decline, since the active population had in fact decreased considerably overall. The decrease in absolute numbers then, was from 2972 to only 872.

However, agriculture was not 'rationalised' as peasants became squeezed out by increased efficiency in farming techniques. Rather, peasants left the land because they were no longer able to make a living from it and new opportunities were opening up in industry in the North, abroad, in education and in the state system.

The figures also show that this exodus was not absorbed by other sectors of the local economy. Instead there was simply a decline in the active population. Most of this

can be accounted for by emigration. Between 1961 and 71, 1321 Grottesi were registered as emigrants - almost double the figure for the previous decade, of 698. The 1960's then, were the peak period for emigration (c.f. King et al 1985 in Hudson and Lewis: 106). Many did not bother to register and many more, once they had relatives established abroad, emigrated to work for them seasonally. The official figures thus do not account for this kind of movement.

Unlike many other towns in the South where emigrants from a single place gravitate upon a handful of locations, at Grotta, the list of destinations seemed endless: North America (Boston, New York, Toronto, Montreal); South America (Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil); Britain (Leeds, Nottingham, Bedford, London, Glasgow, Edinburgh); South Africa, Australia, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, France, and then North Italy (Turin, Milan, Modena, Como, Spezia, Bologna, Roma) etc.

Most of those who left were young single men and a great many were uneducated and illiterate peasants. At the same time it is nevertheless true that people of all age, status and social strata left. The diversity of employment carried out by the emigrants from Grotta is also notable: tailor in Venezuela; manager of a linoleum factory in Leeds; lorry driver; self-employed mechanic and nightclub accordionist in Bedford; building contractor in New York. In one group of siblings, the children of a stone mason, there were: a waiter in London, two hotel workers in Alexandria near Glasgow, a musician in a town band in Switzerland; and a Fiat worker in Turin.

From these many and varied occupations, the emigrants usually managed to remit sums of money to assist families at home *and* to save considerable sums for their own return. Savings were earmarked for building a new home or buying the land on which to build. The construction industry was given a boost and was further assisted by the earthquake of 1962 which not only made new houses a necessity but also meant that the state would be providing funds for reconstruction purposes.

Some local people picked up on the significance of this situation more quickly than others. Among these were a new breed of entrepreneurs who struck it rich by speculating on the property market following the earthquake. One man in particular, Sciarappa, is renowned for his dealings after the earthquake. He cajoled and persuaded many people to sell him their house or indeed any building they owned which could pass for damaged by the earthquake. At first this was a limited enterprise but Sciarappa soon began to accumulate capital since in buying the damaged properties he also bought the rights to claim state reconstruction funds. Before long he was the largest building

contractor in the town. Only years later was the law changed to prevent this type of action.

He was by no means the only speculator in this period. The building boom and the influx of State funds caused both by the earthquake and by the general shift in state policy towards the South opened up opportunities for expansion in the construction industry. This carried over into other associated areas of retail and wholesale business and commerce.

Some families succeeded in capitalising on the agricultural changes by setting up large commercial enterprises for the sale of agricultural machinery. The two largest enterprises were again of humble beginnings, one being a peasant, the other the owner of a small shop. Again the state played its part here providing subsidies to peasants to buy machinery. However, in a great many cases this machinery lay idle as the *contadini* continued to use older methods on their tiny plots of land in what had anyway become a cushion of subsistence rather than the mainstay of the domestic economy.

The construction industry's biggest support was the state funding of public works: roads, schools, offices, public housing. New development plans were drawn up and approved by the local council earmarking new areas of expansion. Applications were made to the Minister of Public Works and to the Cassa for funding. *Edilizia economica e popolare* - cheap, popular (or council) housing formed an important part of these plans.

Also in these years, money was requested and granted for the completion of the primary school as well as the construction of small annexes in various parts of the campagna. New roads were planned and constructed, old ones were improved, water supply and drainage facilities were extended to all areas of the countryside. An old church and prison situated along the main *corso* were demolished to make way for a new piazza. This overlooked, and opened the town up to, the main area of new urban development (See Map 4). Plots of land were set aside for the construction of new offices for the CBU, for a new *campo sportivo* (football pitch), for a new post office, and a new communal *macello* (slaughterhouse).

By 1966 the construction of the Naples-Bari *autostrada* was under way, with Grottaminarda a probable location of one of the exits. And then in 1967 land was appropriated for the construction of houses by an organisation called GESCAL, operating on behalf of families left homeless by the earthquake.

However, amidst this activity and change, the situation was far from straightforward or unproblematic. Land prices soared as the necessity of having plots of land to build on increased. This speculation also went on in the case of land set aside for public buildings and works. The various plans mentioned above came to a halt as arguments arose over the allotment and expropriation of land. Further accusations were made that individuals were using their influence to have continual adjustments made to the original plans in order to avoid expropriation.

In a great many cases, despite the fact that funding had been granted, public works did not in fact get beyond the planning stage. Certainly, very few were completed. This situation was cultivated by and extremely lucrative for the various experts involved- architects, engineers, surveyors, accountants, lawyers. Every time plans were re-elaborated, they would be paid for their services. The building contractors also benefited as they could go on almost indefinitely asking for further funding on the grounds that delays meant increases in the cost of labour and materials. It is well known that they too cultivated this situation using their political contacts where necessary.

Thus, by 1969, the construction of the *case popolari* had not even begun and in the meantime those who had been made homeless continued to live in pre-fabs and mobile homes which were poorly equipped, freezing in winter and overheated in summer. Employment prospects were poor. Due to the delays in almost all the public works, the potential labour force was idle. Some private construction did continue- frequently without the required building licence or with a licence given out illegally.

The primary school building was not completed until 1971 despite the continual flow of funds to the *comune* to this end over the past ten years. The same applies to many other public buildings. In the meantime, these institutions rented premises, thus again providing an opportunity for local property owners to benefit and indeed to prefer delays in the process of reconstruction.

The influence of state intervention was not exhausted in the concrete provision of infrastructure but rather took on its full significance in the setting up of agencies and institutions to administer this development, and in educating those who would staff these agencies. As mentioned, it was frequently the professionals and 'experts' who benefitted most from this situation and indeed this period saw the burgeoning of experts, professionals, bureaucrats, and functionaries.

In 1951 only 95 persons were employed in the Public Administration and Service sectors - 2.5% of the active population. By 1971 these figures had risen to 282 or 11.6% of the active population. In the same period the number of graduates at Grotta increased from 30 to 73; the number of *diplomati* (i.e. those with a secondary school leaving certificate) rose form 82 to 314; and the number of *analfabeti* decreased from 2 227 to 1 168 (CCIAA 1975). The only reason that the statistics do not show a greater decline in illiteracy is that many young adults who would have been included as literate had emigrated and the remaining population was 'overweight' with old people.

Throughout the 1960's then, the *delibere* of the *consiglio comunale* (i.e. the minutes of town council meetings) are, amidst the personal and political squabbling, full of nominations for and appointments of *progettisti* (planners) for the various public works that it is the wish or duty of the council to execute. These are followed, much later, by *liquidazione spese* (liquidation of expenses) to these same *progettisti* for work carried out or plans drawn up.

In this situation, acquiring an education became an increasingly important and ultimately lucrative option for Grottesi. Amongst the vastly increased number of *laureati* (graduates) many were the sons of peasants and artisans. Two of the foremost members of the local Communist Party in the 1960's and 70's were respectively the sons of a *bottaio* (barrel maker) and *contadini*. Both graduated from Naples University in 1964 and became teachers. The first *ingegnere* (civil engineer) that the town produced was the son of a *calzolaio* (cobbler). Many others went further afield to University - to Padua, Rome, Milan - and became teachers, lawyers, bureaucrats and professionals in other parts of the country.

A degree was not necessarily required for many public posts. To obtain the title of *geometra* (surveyor) or *ragioniere* (accountant) or to become a teacher at primary school level, it was necessary only to have a diploma from the appropriate secondary school.

5.3. The Installation of the Christian Democrats

As was made clear in Chapter Two, the proliferation of bureaucrats and professionals in the post-war period was intimately tied to the emergence of the Christian Democrats as the *partito di governo*. However, at Grotta, as we have seen, the 'traditional' elite, represented by the figures of Don Aristide Romano and Don Achille Vitale, held onto their position for some time, thus hindering the shift from *clientelismo dei notabili* to *clientelismo del partito*.

Yet in 1961 a decisive step was taken in this direction. In the local elections of that year there was a complete turnaround in the composition of the Town Council with a new Christian Democrat list ousting the old guard. This list was made up of candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds - many of them ordinary, if perhaps upwardly mobile, peasants and artisans. According to some local people Don Aristide and the Bianco family were offended at having suffered such a defeat and this is reflected in the minutes of the council meeting held to install the new DC administration. In an acrimonious exchange, the minority group announced that they were leaving the hall and accused their opponents of irregularities at the polls:

> *Riteniamo che i risultati di queste elezioni non siano ne legittime ne realmente rappresentative della volontà popolare. Non accettiamo perciò di essere personalmente coinvolti ne assumiamo alcuna responsibilità in questa farsa.*
>
> We hold that the results of this election are neither legitimate nor truly representative of the people's will. Therefore we do not accept personal involvement, nor do we acknowledge any responsibility for this charade.
>
> (D.C.C. 7.12.61)

The accusations of the minority group even reached the editorial of the Monarchist newspaper of the time *il Roma* (3.12.61) and led to an official investigation. This however, came to nothing. Many local people involved in local politics today reflected on this as a decisive step in breaking the control of the old dominant families and in ending the *lotta tra famiglie* (inter-family struggle) as the predominant mode of political activity. Even supporters of the slowly emerging Communist Party had backed the DC list in order to achieve this end.

It must be stressed that, as at national level, this change was not simply a changing of the guard. It was part of the process whereby Grotta's relationship with the state, and with the core in general, was radically altered. From then on the nature of

political relations was irrevocably altered and the emergent political elite found itself in a new position both in relation to its clientele and to the state. The tenor of politicking changed as the leaders of the new administration became more and more explicitly linked to the DC at a higher level, taking on the role of brokers for the distribution of state funds, which were as we saw, in ample supply.

This shift is reflected in the town council meetings from this period. In one of the first meetings of the new DC administration early in 1962, the newly elected *sindaco*, an up-and-coming peasant smallholder, asked the council to approve the budget that had been prepared. Introducing it he states:

> *Grotta non può risolvere i suoi problemi di opere ... con le sue modeste entrate ordinarie e straordinarie costituite dalle imposte che gravano sui i cittadini, sui lavoratori, sui contadini, ma deve trovare nelle leggi speciali e negli interventi dello stato e della Cassa, i mezzi per il realizzo delle opere.*
>
> Grotta cannot resolve its public works problems ... with its meagre ordinary and extraordinary income consisting of the taxes that weigh upon its citizens, its workers, its peasants, but must find in special laws and in the interventions of the state and of the Southern Fund, the means to carry out these works.
> (D.C.C. 4.3.62)

In this way, he went on to say, they would:

> *mettere Grottaminarda sulla via di progresso materiale e morale.*
>
> put Grottaminarda on the road to material and moral progress.
> (ibid)

A few months later the new administrators began to congratulate themselves for the work they had started, in a fashion that was to become increasingly popular and which as we will see, is still used today:

> *i più urgenti problemi sono stati affrontati, impostati e avviati a soluzione sotto la guida del nostro Grande Partito, la Democrazia Cristiana, e con l'assistenza benevola di Sua Eccelenza Fiorentino Sullo, Ministro dei Lavori Pubblici al quale va, in questo momento, il nostro affettuoso saluto di ringraziamento e gratitudine.*
>
> The most urgent problems have been faced up to, formulated and set on their way to a solution under the guidance of our Great Party, the Christian Democrats and with the benevolent assistance of His Excellency Fiorentino Sullo, Minister of Public Works, to whom we send at this moment our affectionate greeting of thankfulness and gratitude
> (D.C.C. 2.7.62)

There then follows a long list of public works that have been carried out, or are under way or planned and which have been financed with state funds or loans - road repairs, drains, school buildings in the countryside etc. In this way then these works became appropriated or as Graziano puts it (Graziano, L. 1984: 190) 'confiscated' and 'privatised' by individual parliamentarians and then presented to the grateful clients in local communities as favours, gifts, fruits of their paternalistic and personal intervention. Subsequently, local politicians 'privatised' the intervention of the minister as fruits of *their* intervention, thus demonstrating the scope of their influence and their worthiness as patrons.

For many people, this new elite were mere upstarts. However, they were extremely important upstarts who had access to the major source of resources: the State. Thus although people no longer deferred to them in the same way as they would have to Don Achille and Don Aristide, they nevertheless had to cultivate good relations with them. It was these men who granted planning permission and dished out building contracts, licences to the contractors and professionals like Sciarappa.

Most observers of similar situations (Boissevain 1966; Weingrod 1967-8; Graziani 1973) have suggested that core-periphery relations during this period are best described in terms of *mediation* by an elite group between two systems. The patrons act as gatekeepers, obtaining favours from their patrons at a higher level and distributing them among their clients at a local level. The access to the higher level for the latter is controlled by the local elite. However, as was pointed out in Chapter Two, this conception is not sufficient for a full understanding of the relationship.

While it is true that the new elite of local politicians and professionals in Grotta did occupy an extremely important strategic position in the structure of relations between core and periphery; a position from which they were able to exercise some control over the channels of resources to the state, there are several reasons for rejecting the conception of these brokers and mediators as the crucial link between two cultures or as an overall model of core-periphery relations.

To begin with, if they do constitute a group at all, it is one with a much broader base in the community than that from which the traditional *notabili* come. Its members come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including artisans and peasants who have moved up the system by obtaining qualifications and making the right connections. This is in opposition to an earlier period when people like Perillo (see section 3.2. above), and to a

lesser extent, Don Achille and Don Aristide, were indeed members of a demarcated elite which monopolised almost all links with the outside world[1].

Secondly, the establishment of party politics was manifested not only in the installation of the DC in the local administration but also in the participation in local government for the first time by the Communist Party with two councillors on the *consiglio comunale*. One result of this situation was that council minutes expanded and the arguments and disputes that were going on became more apparent. The communists were outspoken in their criticism and in making specific and explicit accusations. It becomes clear, for example that the those in control of the administration evaded revision of the local taxation system and of the list of those subject to tax in order to avoid alienating the professionals and contractors on whose ability to collect votes they relied - or indeed to protect their *own* interests - i.e. avoid taxing themselves. I would suggest that although clientelistic politics continued, it was accompanied by increasing protest from a more organised and 'modern' opposition.

It was not just in the *consiglio comunale* that this opposition to the local elite, new and old, was carried out. In addition there were a number of left-wing extra-parliamentary political activists who formed a section of the organisation *Lotta Continua* ('Continual Struggle') and took part in local and national demonstrations. These were mainly young people who had gone to University in the North, particularly to Padua. They had taken part in left-wing protests there towards the end of the 1960's in conjunction with the French students' protests of these years.

The group was a limited phenomenon. Its members filtered gradually into the Communist Party or emigrated again. Support from ordinary people for the protests that they did make was most frequently related to specific problems - particularly the failure of the government to make speedy provision for housing and jobs in the aftermath of the earthquake. Yet, though limited the group's very existence demonstrates an awareness of political ideas and ideology that goes far beyond the traditional rivalry of the *notabili and* the mediation and brokerage of the new elite. It is further evidence then of a more complex relationship between core and periphery. From this period onwards, it became

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[1] It should be stressed however, that the 'old guard' in fact took a lot longer to go away than has been implied and continued to be influential well into the 1970's. When proportional representation was introduced in 1964 it created new opportunities for minority parties to exert an influence in the political arena disproportionate to their size. Administrations became extremely unstable and don Aristide and don Achille took advantage of this by joining forces.

necessary for *all* politicians to affirm their concern for the common good and to denounce clientelism.

Finally, Grotta's relationship with the core had changed dramatically in other ways, particularly through emigration and education which brought people face-to-face, in their everyday lives, with the demands of the core and with its images of backwardness and modernity. Let us now turn to the final section of this chapter to look at these images and representations as they emerged in the 1960's.

5.4. Grotta and Images of Backwardness and Modernity in the 1960's

The aim in this section is to show that it was in the 1960's that ordinary Grottesi began dealing with these images in their everyday lives. Moreover, it is my contention that this is one of the most significant features of their 'entry' into the most recent 'stage of integration'.

In the 1960's a far greater awareness of the importance of 'development' as the means of overcoming the town's 'backwardness' became apparent. Resolutions were passed supporting the town's involvement in a proposed agency for the industrial development of the Ufita Valley (D.C.C. 19.9.63). Then as new houses and new jobs failed to materialise despite the need for reconstruction; as emigration increased, being the only option for many; as the unrest grew and protests became more frequent, talk of industrialisation became louder and louder.

Demands were sent to the Government asking for the introduction of large industries in the Ufita Valley, for the creation of at least 10 000 jobs and for improvements to infrastructure (D.C.C. 15.11.1966). Frequently in explaining the poor economic situation of the area councillors would refer to the relationship between North and South. The following is a statement by a young Communist councillor of peasant background:

> *E` dal 1860, cioè dall'Unità d'Italia che è cominciata la rapina del Mezzogiorno sia di capitali che di forza di lavoro e ora che il governo di Roma ci restituisca le bricciole di quello che è stato usurpato al meridione 110 anni a questa parte. Noi dobbiamo inserirci con movimento di lotta a tutti i livelli nel largo movimento che va svilppandosi in questi giorni in tutti gli italiani. La parola d'ordine deve essere quella di fermare l'esodo dalle nostre zone.*
>
> It is since 1860, that is, from Unification onwards, that the robbery of the South's capital *and* labour began and only now the government in Rome gives us back the crumbs of what was usurped from the South 110 years ago. We must enter, with protest at all

levels, into the broad movement that is presently developing among all Italians. The by-word must be to stop the exodus from our zone.
(D.C.C. 15.11.70)

Despite the obvious rhetoric in this statement, it can still be seen that there is a greater awareness of the town's position in a national context which was never previously present in the minutes of town council meetings. Moreover, it manifests a 'sense of place' which is clearly rooted in the very real experience of the various facets of integration. For one thing it is a statement of someone who has been *educated* and who recognises in intellectual terms the effects of an historical process. In addition, the singling out of *emigration* as central to the problems of the area, can easily be seen to be derived from the concrete experience of the departure of so many relatives and friends to North Italy and Europe.

That emigration had profound effects on people's sense of place - particularly for those who emigrated - is further revealed by a statement from another peasant from Grotta, quoted in a Communist provincial newspaper in 1965:

Meglio soffrire la fame nel mio paese, anzichè andare all'estero per sentirme chiamato zingaro.

Better to suffer hunger in my own town than to go abroad and hear people call me a tinker.
(Progresso Irpino: 16.10.65)

Here is evidence then of the kind of prejudice faced by those who emigrated. The point to note here is that the peasant is aware of the labels that are attached to him as an emigrant. He has been brought into a new relationship, into a new classification, and must develop a response in order to maintain his identity and dignity. In his case this means staying at home, even if this means material hardship.

Many more examples could be cited from the testimony of local people today. However, these will be discussed in later chapters on 'sense of place' in the contemporary period.

6. Summary

In the course of this chapter we have seen shifts in Grottaminarda's relationship with the core at each of the three stages of integration. In the first stage, although the town's links to wider spheres were evident in economic and political/administrative contexts, people's *distance* from the core was most apparent. During Fascism, the relationship continued to be a distant one with people's allegiance to the regime largely nominal. However, the changes of this period exerted a profound influence on local society. At the institutional level, the basis for a new relationship with the State was laid and ideologically, even if Mussolini's propaganda was not accepted, it undoubtedly had an effect on people's sense of place as members of a wider society.

In the third stage Grottesi began to encounter images and representations of backwardness and modernity in their everyday lives. At all levels then, from the political and economic to the cultural and ideological, Grotta was brought into a new relationship with the core. This took full effect in the 1960's and was manifested in State intervention (both in its logic and in its concrete presence); in increasingly widespread educational qualifications, in the emigration figures and statements about emigration; in the rhetoric and actions of local politicians; in the economic activities of local entrepreneurs. Although the changes were by no means clear-cut, what *is* clear is that in understanding this new relationship with the core it is necessary to go beyond the concept of mediation and that of dependency.

From the 1960's onwards, local people are participants in core culture at all levels. this is not to say that they are full and equal participants. Through the transformations that have taken place at each stage their subordinate position (as southerners) in relation to the core has been reproduced. In this latest stage subordination is manifested most significantly in the images and representations of the South and southerners as backward. These images finally became an everyday matter, influencing people's sense of place, their self-image and identity. The purpose of the ethnographic chapters that now follow is to show how they deal with this situation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Grottaminarda Today: the Geographical Setting

1. Introduction

In the previous two chapters, we have taken an historical perspective in order to describe the process whereby Southern Italy in general, and Grotta in particular, have been incorporated into a wider 'core' economy and culture. The process was characterised in terms of three 'stages of integration' in each of which the nature of relations between local society and the dominant core was significantly changed.

The purpose of the next two chapters is to provide the reader with a picture of the basic geographical, demographic and economic characteristics of the community. Where, then, is Grottaminarda? And what is it like? To some extent the reader will already have a picture from the previous chapter. More detail is now required. Yet providing this is not as straightforward as it seems. It inevitably involves us in an already existing classification which is imbued precisely with those images of 'backwardness' and 'modernity' with which we are concerned. It is necessary to keep this carefully in mind in the following discussion.

2. Campania, Avellino, Grottaminarda

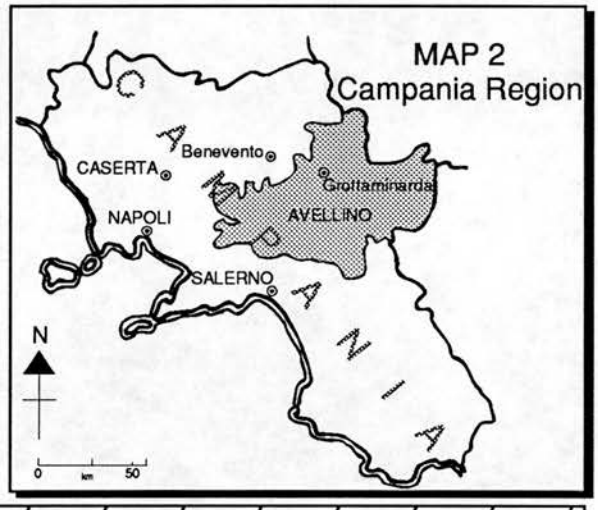
2.1 The Natural Environment

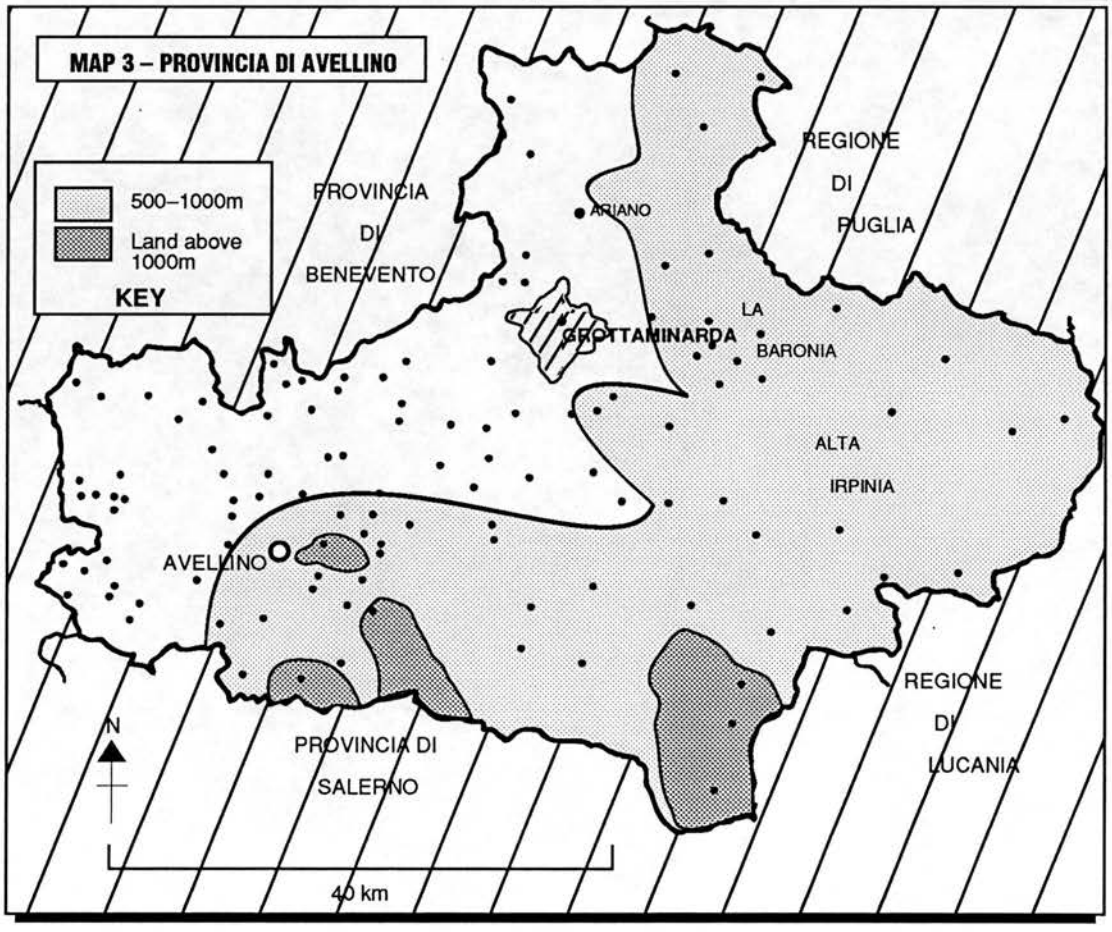
Grottaminarda is set in the southern section of the Appenine 'backbone' of the Italian peninsula, in the province of Avellino (also known as Irpinia). Avellino is one of the five provinces that make up the region of Campania (see Map 2). The other four are Napoli, Caserta, Salerno and Benevento.

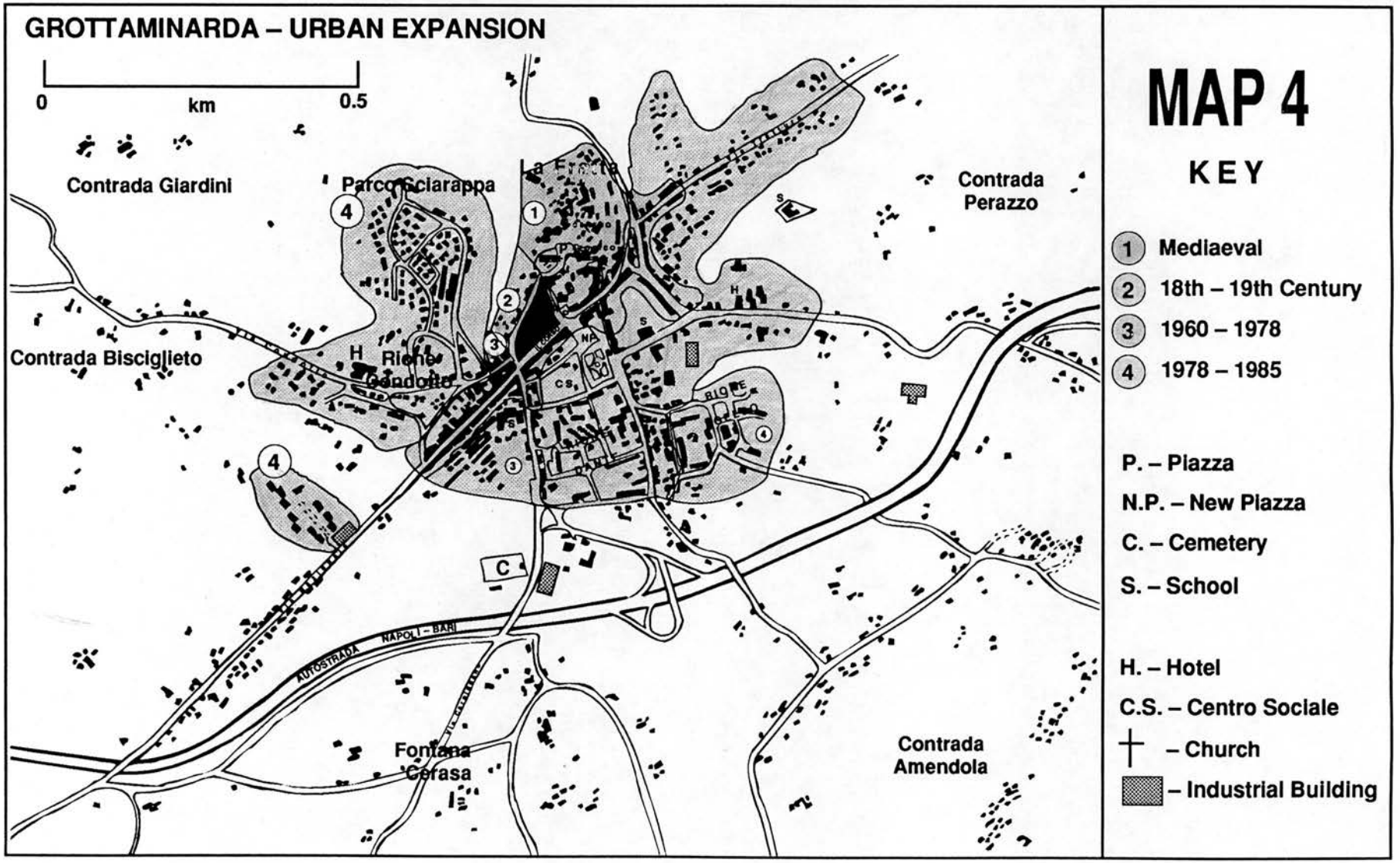
Topographically, Campania is characterised by a marked division between coastal plains and a hilly and mountainous interior. In effect, the former constitute a relatively restricted area consisting of the flood plains of the region's two main river systems - the Volturno and the Sele - as they feed out into the Tyrrhenian Sea. These plains represent little more than 15% of the surface area of the region. Leaving the coast we move into the foothills and then the mountains of the Campanian Appenines which consist principally of impermeable clays and marls. These are interrupted only by a narrow, yet spectacular chain of high limestone peaks running sporadically from the

MAPS 1 -3


MAP 1
ITALIA
MILANO
TORINO
VENEZIA
BOLOGNA
FIRENZE
Mare
NORTH – SOUTH DIVIDE
Adriatico
ROMA
CAMPANIA
BARI
Mare
Tirrennico
NAPOLI
CAGLIARI
PALERMO
REGGIO CALABRIA
N
0 km 200


MAP 2
Campania Region
CAMPANIA
Benevento
CASERTA
Grottaminarda
AVELLINO
NAPOLI
SALERNO
N
0 km 50


MAP 3 – PROVINCIA DI AVELLINO
500–1000m
Land above 1000m
KEY
PROVINCIA DI BENEVENTO
ARIANO
REGIONE DI PUGLIA
GROTTAMINARDA
LA BARONIA
ALTA IRPINIA
AVELLINO
PROVINCIA DI SALERNO
REGIONE DI LUCANIA
N
40 km


GROTTAMINARDA – URBAN EXPANSION
0
km
0.5
Contrada Giardini
Parco Sciarappa
Contrada Perazzo
Contrada Bisciglieto
Rione Gandolfo
Fontana Cerasa
Contrada Amendola
AUTOSTRADA NAPOLI – BARI
MAP 4
KEY
1 Mediaeval
2 18th – 19th Century
3 1960 – 1978
4 1978 – 1985
P. – Piazza
N.P. – New Piazza
C. – Cemetery
S. – School
H. – Hotel
C.S. – Centro Sociale
– Church
– Industrial Building

Matese area in northern Caserta to the south of Salerno. These limestone peaks traverse the southern part of the province of Avellino producing a series of jagged snow-capped mountains amidst the more gentle yet convoluted hills and valleys further inland. Grotta is situated in the latter area in the valley of the River Ufita.

These features of topography and geology are the basic determinants of soils and climate within the region. On the coast, the alluvial deposits of the rivers and the ash and volcanic deposits of Vesuvius create soils that are extremely fertile and rich. Inland, on the other hand, the soils are clay-based and therefore heavy and impermeable and by comparison with the coast infertile.

The characteristic Mediterranean climate of the South with its mild winters and hot summers is modified in various ways in different parts of Campania. Not surprisingly the clearest distinction is once again between the coastal and inland zones. The former receive the moderating influence of the sea such that variations in temperature are not marked. On the other hand the hilly and mountainous zones experience wide fluctuations in temperature which can produce damaging frost. Hail storms and heavy falls of snow are not infrequent. Throughout the region there are heavy falls of rain in spring and autumn. However, in summer the inland areas are far more susceptible to thunderstorms. Moreover the consequences of these weather conditions are different. Inland, the predominance of impermeable rock and clay soils together with the mountainous terrain mean that heavy rains can have a devastating effect, stripping land of its topsoil and causing severe erosion and landslips which frequently undermine roads and buildings. In summer the earth is hard, caked and impenetrable; in winter heavy, sticky and muddy. Rivers which are reduced to a trickle in summer become huge and devastating torrents which can sweep away bridges and cause other extensive damage. These problems are made worse by the fact that over the centuries large areas of land, particularly in the most inland parts of the province, have been severely deforested.

To some extent Grottaminarda is saved from the full consequences of these conditions since it lies in the rainshadow of the aforementioned limestone peaks. Nevertheless, it still suffers some of the problems produced by the combination of soils and climate.

Problems are further accentuated by the fact that the area is susceptible to earthquakes. In the past twenty five years there have been two major earth tremors - one in 1962 and one in 1980. The first had its epicentre around Melito and Ariano, two of Grotta's adjacent *comuni*. It was not as strong as that of 1980 which devastated many towns in the area known as 'Alta Irpinia', considered to be the most internal area of the province.

2.2. Population

In terms of population the region of Campania has the largest numbers of all the southern regions (5 463 134 in the last census of 1981) and the highest density for the whole of Italy. This is almost entirely due to the overwhelming presence of the huge Neapolitan metropolis which together with the surrounding 'archipelago' of towns forms a massive conurbation of around four million people - around 70-75% of the regional total (Svimez 1984 37/3: 268). In the province of Naples alone 54% of the region's population live on only 8.6% of the surface area. By contrast, the province of Avellino accounts for only 434 021 persons occupying over 20% of the territory of Campania (ibid). Since both the towns of Caserta and Salerno in effect form part of the Neapolitan conurbation, the only remaining areas of relatively high population density are the islands formed by the provincial capitals of Avellino and Benevento which each number around 60 000.

It can be seen then that just as geology, natural resources and climate separate *Campania Costeria* from *Campania Interna*, so too do the basic demographic characteristics of the region. This is further reflected in the movement of population over recent years.

In the coastal belt the effects of population loss have been mitigated by the very high birth rate of this densely populated area and by immigration to the city of Naples from other parts of the South.

Meanwhile in the internal provinces the *decrease* in population from emigration has been phenomenal, in many towns completely outstripping natural increase. Between the censuses of 1951 and 1971, the total population of the province of Avellino declined by 67 616 from 495 095 to 427 479. Taking into account the natural increase of 113 822 in the same period, the total number of emigrants reaches 181 438 - some 29.8% of the 1951 figure plus natural increase. On top of these figures there are, in addition, those who remained resident but were registered as *"temporaneamente assente"* - temporarily absent. In 1971 9.8% of the population of Avellino were so classified (CCIAA 1973: 27). And while

Avellino and Benevento together account for 12.9% of the population of the region, between 1961 and 1971 emigration from these provinces amounted to 37.4% of the regional total.

Just as at the regional level, the heaviest emigration was from the most internal areas, so at the provincial level Avellino town has experienced increases in population while the most remote communities have suffered huge declines. Some villages, like Greci, Montaguto, Savignano, and Lacedonia have experienced declines of 40-50% between 1951 and 1971 - and this figure does not take into account natural increase. All of these villages are situated in the remotest parts of the province. Most towns and villages (91 out of 119) in the province experienced a decline of more than 10% between 1951 and 1971. Again, by contrast Avellino experienced an increase of more than 40% in the same period and its population has continued to grow rapidly since then.

Where does Grotta fit into this demographic situation? Excluding the provincial capital itself as well as Ariano which has a population of around 28, 000, the average size of town in Irpinia is around 3000. Grotta, however, is one of a handful of towns with a population of around 10, 000. This generous estimate which exceeds the 1985 figure in the local registry of 8168 is given to account for the many incomers who have come to live and work in or near Grotta but who have not registered as resident.

Grotta's population has in fact been steadily increasing since the early 1970's and was given a further boost in 1978 by the opening of the Fiat bus assembly factory in the immediate vicinity of the town. People from neighbouring towns who work in the factory have found it more convenient to travel from Grotta and hence have settled there. Indeed this is the case for many others employed in Avellino, Ariano and Naples.

Moreover, Grotta is one of the few towns in the province that has escaped the decimation of emigration. Between 1951 and 1971 its population declined by only 4-5% - the lowest figure for any town of the 'internal' area of the province. From 1971-1981 there was actually an increase from 7347 to 7978. It has thus come to be regarded as a small centre for the neighbouring towns of the Valle Ufita.

2.2 Transport and Communications

Road and rail links in the region also show the opposition coastal/internal *pianura/montagna* exerting a determining influence. There is a proliferation of communication links in the plains area and all main road and rail links converge on the city of Naples. The city also has important air and sea ports.

On the other hand, as we move into the internal areas, the choice of routes becomes more restricted and main roads and railway lines less frequent.

By rail, the two main lines that run through the internal area of the region are characterised by extremely contorted and convoluted routes - the result of political manoeuvering as well as conformity to the tortuous nature of the valleys - and a service which is slow, unreliable, infrequent and little used. Moreover, as a result of the fact that the railways follow the valleys, most stations tend to be detached from the towns which they serve since the latter are usually situated on hilltop sites.

The vast majority of major communication links in Campania are roads. This tendency has been reinforced in recent years with the construction of more and more *autostrade* and as a result the minor railways have deteriorated and become obsolescent.

Roads within the internal areas are characterised by a dualism which mirrors that existing between coastal and mountain zones. There are few main roads and those that exist tend to follow a restricted number of routes. New roads tend to 'double-up' on old ones. This is *partly* due to the limitations set by the terrain.

The principal trans-Appenine route through Campania is the Napoli-Bari *autostrada*. This road, and all the other main roads across the Appenines are designed to *pass through* the internal areas to link regional centres rather than to serve the needs of the internal areas. Hence there is a marked contrast between these roads and the poorly maintained roads that link the towns and villages within individual provinces . These latter roads tend to run along high ground where possible since most towns are, as mentioned, hill-top settlements. This leads to a twisting and tortuous pattern of roads climbing and zig-zagging up and down hillsides. As a result of this pattern these roads are also susceptible to the problems of landslips and earthquakes discussed above.

Within this picture Grottaminarda once again stands out as something of an exception. Unlike its neighbours it is not a hill-top town but is situated as Francesco

Romano observed *"su d'una ondulazione di terra poco considerevole"* "on an unremarkable hillock" (op. cit.). At its highest point it is only 405m above sea level as compared with the 600-1000m of most of its neighbouring communities. Therefore it has become an ideal location for the confluence of roads and acts as an important link between many of the internal villages and the provincial and regional capitals. This position has been enhanced by the construction of the *autostrada* with an exit that leads almost directly into the town centre. This in turn partly influenced the decision to situate the Fiat bus assembly factory adjacent to the town in the flood plain of the Valle Ufita (although this decision as we will see later was largely a political one).

Let us turn now to the overall economic context within which Grotta is situated.

2.4 The Economic Environment

When it comes to the regional economy, things perhaps inevitably become more complicated. At a broad level, however, the same oppositions found in the previous sections can be, and are, transformed into economic terms. The basic difference is described in the following manner by Fonte:

> *"Un profondo squilibrio territoriale caratterizza la distribuzione della risorse economiche, così che troviamo una larga fascia corrispondente alle province di Napoli, Caserta e Salerno, sviluppata a ricca di initiative, e zona interna - le province di Avellino e Benevento - povera e sempre più abbandonata."*
>
> A profound territorial imbalance characterises the distribution of economic resources such that we find a broad belt corresponding to the provinces of Naples, Caserta and Salerno [which is] developed and rich in initiatives, and an internal zone - the provinces of Avellino and Benevento - poor and increasingly abandoned.
> (Fonte, M. in Graziani and Pugliese 1979: 343)

Having seen that the central zone was densely populated in opposition to the sparse and declining population of the internal provinces it should come as no surprise that the oppositions urban/rural, *città/campagna* apply to the region also. Thus the 'developed' coastal zone is not only highly urbanised and industrialised, but also has the most advanced and richest sectors of *agricultural* production in the region. Thus, with only 25% of the arable land in Campania and 41% of the total numbers employed in agriculture, the coastal belt produces 60% of regional agricultural output. Conversely the internal area contributes only 40% of this output while occupying 75% of the arable area (ibid: 344). In addition despite the fact that a great deal of the productive agriculture of the coastal zone is precariously carried out by small peasant farmers on tiny plots of land, this

agriculture is nevertheless intimately bound to modern, highly capitalised food processing industries. In contrast, in the internal areas from the 1950s onwards, agriculture has been progressively run down to become little more than a cushion of subsistence for families whose main income is derived from other sources: emigration, employment in public administration, State pensions, etc.

In industry, as pointed out by Abignente et al (Territorio e Risorse in Campania Vol I 1979: 50-51) the dualism applies once again. The vast majority of industrial enterprises - both those that have traditionally characterised the region (leather products, textiles, clothing, food products and furniture making) and the more 'modern' investments (chemical industries, metal manufacturing and engineering, etc) - are concentrated in the coastal area in and around Naples: so much so that this area has come to be regarded by some as *'il Nord del Mezzogiorno'* - the North of the South (ibid).

An 'intermediate' area between the most intensely industrialised zone and the most marginal and rural internal zones can be distinguished corresponding to the provincial towns of Avellino and Benevento and their immediate hinterlands where in recent years *'poli industriali'* have been set up.

This is particularly noticeable in the case of Avellino where on the outskirts of the *capoluogo*, in an area known as Pianodardine, a sprawling industrial estate has developed. Add to this the modern and efficient tanning industry of nearby Solofra and the Fiat factory in the vicinity of Grotta and the industrial make up of the province is complete. In this way, then, the regional dualism is reproduced at provincial level.

Hence although about 50% of *comuni* in Campania have no industrial initiatives within their territory, this figure rises to over 60% for Avellino province as opposed to 15% for Napoli province. Moreover, only two *comuni* in Avellino (Solofra and Avellino town itself) have more than thirty *unità produttive* (productive units) within their territory. The same two are also the only ones with an occupational density for industry of more than 2000 employees.

The only notable exception to the concentration of industry in the vicinity of the *capoluogo* of the province is the Fiat factory mentioned above which employs around 1000 people. This puts Grottaminarda in something of an ambivalent position. On the one hand, as pointed out by Sciarelli et al (1982: 28) the factory is too isolated to have made much of an impact on the industrial productive structure of the province. On the other

hand, its presence, together with the *autostrada* make it possible to describe the town (or the Valle Ufita) as an intermediate zone between the coastal zone and the internal areas.

The economy of the town will be discussed more fully in sections that follow. The aim here is to characterise the economic environment within which it is situated. This can be done by looking at some of the typical indicators of economic development or depression that are used by the State and other academic and official authorities.

In terms of income per capita - widely held to be a reliable indicator by official sources (c.f. Chapter Two 2.3.2) - the average Campanian in 1974 earned an income equivalent to 68% of the Italian average. This figure is, however, produced from an average of 72% for Naples and only 46% for Avellino (Fonte, M. 1979: 345). Without heavy emigration from the province this figure would have been even lower. By 1981 this figure had increased to 49.1%. However, the province was still fourth last in a list of all the southern provinces. Indeed Avellino is frequently ranked among the lowest and most depressed of all the provinces in the country as a whole in terms of many of the indicators used.

In terms of product per capita, Avellino was second last in the 'league table' of southern provinces in 1973. Five years later in 1978 it remained in the same position at an index of only 53% of the national average (Svimez 1981b: 34/3-4: 41). In the same article from which these figures were taken, which sought to identify economic subsystems within the South, Avellino ends up in a 'residual' category of provinces which have the greatest difference between their economic productivity and the national average (ibid: 53). This situation was confirmed in 1983 when the province moved up only one place in the list (Saraceno 1984: 267).

In addition to the above economic indicators, Avellino's position within Campania, and indeed in the South as a whole, is frequently assessed according to the extremely high figures for emigrant remittances and for claims for State transfer payments (e.g. Svimez 1981b: 54). According to Svimez, these two sources of income result in a partial 'correction' of the otherwise lamentable state of the provincial economy (ibid). However, other observers regard these as indicators of the lack of autonomy of the economy - its inability to rely on its own productive structure:

> *Avellino è soffocata dal flusso dei trasferimenti, che relegano in secondo piano la presenza di una struttura produttiva.*
>
> Avellino is suffocated by the flow of transfer payments, which relegate to second place the presence of a productive structure.
> (Boccella, N-M 1982: 60)

Boccella in fact singles out Grottaminarda as the prime example of this dependency, showing that:

> *Grottaminarda ricade fra i comuni più sussidiati per i quali il numero dei pensionati supera il 20 per cento della popolazione residente. Così l'effetto positivo attivato dall'insediamento industriale sul livello e sulla composizione del reddito si discioglie nel sistema dei trasferimenti.*
>
> Grottaminarda falls among the most subsidised *comuni* for which the number of those receiving benefits exceeds 20% of the resident population. Thus, the positive effect created by the industrial installation [i.e. Fiat] on the level and composition of income is negated by the system of transfer payments.
> (ibid)

2.5 The Power of Classification

In the previous four sections I have attempted to describe Grottaminarda's regional and provincial setting in order to provide the reader with the necessary background to the more detailed ethnography to follow. However, as mentioned in the introduction this was not to be regarded as a straightforward matter. Looking back on the above description I hope it can be seen that what has been presented is not just a factual description but also the outline of a classification, a set of oppositions. Moreover, it should be clear that the terms of this classification are the same as or congruous with those that form the substance of the images and representations that characterise the relationship between North and South and designate the South as backward. Let us look more closely at the oppositions that emerge and which are listed below:

Topography/Geography:	Coastal Plains	Internal Mountains, hills
Soils:	Alluvial/volcanic (rich)	clay (poor)
Climate:	mild/moderate	irregular /damaging
Population:	dense immigration	sparse emigration
Communications	dense network overused central/integrated diversified fast good	sparse network underused isolated restricted slow poor
Economy	urban developed rich industrial rich agriculture market orientated rich in initiatives high income per capita high product per capita autonomous	rural underdeveloped poor agricultural poor agriculture subsistence poor in initiatives low income per capita low product per capita subsidised/dependent

Obviously in merely listing these oppositions in this way I have obscured the complexity of individual situations. Nevertheless, I would argue that this is legitimate since that is precisely what the images and representations themselves do.

The oppositions do not simply differentiate between natural and objective characteristics. Rather they are loaded with meaning and value that goes far beyond their immediate significance and that has been acquired through the history of relations between North and South, coastal and internal areas, etc. They ascribe status and make judgements. And what they make judgements *about* is relative position in a classification of backwardness and modernity - eminently *social* categories.

This is true of even the most putatively 'natural' features of Campania - the distinction between internal mountains and coastal plains. Thus to describe an area as 'mountainous' or 'internal' in the context of Campania is to conjure up a set of meanings and implications with which all concerned are familiar whether they are academics, officials, the media or ordinary people both in Grotta and elsewhere in the region. They imply a set of characteristics which, generally speaking, are negatively valued and which overlap with many of the other oppositions listed: isolation, poverty, 'social problems', uncouth peasants with a backward mentality, illiteracy, etc.

Other characteristics are classified in the same way: the quality of soils, the degree of damage caused by erosion, the amount of emigration from an area, the density and viability of communication networks and, of course, the various economic indices, *are all measures of relative backwardness and modernity.*

Thus the coastal areas have 'benefitted' from immigration while the internal areas have been *'falcidiato'* - 'decimated' by emigration. The apparent end of emigration indicated by recent census figures is hailed as *"la fine di una grande emoraggia umana"* - "the end of a huge human haemorrhage" (Pontarollo: 45). Industries are *'fiorenti'* and *'vibranti'* ('flourishing' and 'vibrant') or dynamic on the coast while in the mountains agriculture is 'stagnant'. Certain internal areas have 'succeeded' in developing a more modern industrial fabric thus 'closing the gap' between these areas and the national average (e.g. Pontarollo 1982: 44). This is evidenced by, for example, the 'positive' values in the indices for income and product *per capita* or for the proportion of the population employed in industry. Other areas have 'failed to improve' in these respects and thus continue to 'lag behind'. The presence of modern manufacturing industries is *'scarsissima'* ('extremely scarce') and at Grottaminarda the 'positive effects' of industrial development have been 'wiped out' or 'negated' by the high level of transfer payments (Boccella: 60; see above). Even those observers who reject the 'natural' classification and explain the *'divario'* ('gap') between coastal and internal areas as a matter of precise political and economic choices (e.g. Abignente et al, passim), are still tied to the same classification. They adhere to the same unilinear progression from backward to modern with the essential problem of the internal areas being its 'lack' of modernity.

In the above examples I have to an extent caricatured the language generally used to describe the context in which my ethnography is set. Nevertheless I would still argue that this language is *evaluative* and it is evaluative in the context of an asymmetrical relationship. Moreover, as argued in Chapter One, position within this relationship and within the classification that this language expresses is a matter of struggle.

I will attempt to demonstrate this by looking more closely at the 'official version' of this classification, that is, at the descriptions of the economic and social condition of the different areas of Campania contained in official documents like the publications of the government think-tank, SVIMEZ.

Returning again to the topographical features described in section 2.1, ISTAT, the national statistical agency, uses two sets of criteria to distinguish the different areas of Campania region and these correspond *grosso modo* to the categories we have isolated. The first criterion is based on altitude and forms the three categories *montagna, collina* and *pianura* (mountain, hill and plain). It is according to this classification that 15% of the surface area of the region is judged to be *pianura* . The second criterion divides these latter two categories into *'litoranea'* and *'interna'* (coastal and internal). From this it emerges that there are *no* coastal mountains. Yet most of the province of Naples, one third of Salerno and parts of Caserta are to be considered as hilly *and* coastal (ISTAT 1983). Despite this 'complication' official sources generally agree in combining the oppositions coastal: internal and plains: uplands since *economically* the hilly areas of Naples which interrupt the coastal plain are rich enough to be considered as pianura.

Thus a more socio-economic basis to the classification begins to creep in and this comes out more clearly in an example from the provincial level.

In the classification of ISTAT today some two thirds of the surface area and around half of the comuni of the province of Avellino fall into the 'mountainous' category with the rest being 'hilly'. However, this has not always been the case. In 1965 the Provincial Census Commission of Avellino (*Commissione Provinciali Censuaria*) sent a report to the Minister of Finance appealing for the inclusion of the whole province in the category *'montagna'*. In the report they lament the attitude of the Central Census Commission which:

> *per il passato è stato estremanente restrittivo nei riguardi della classificazione montana di molti territori della provincia.*
>
> in the past has been extremely restrictive with respect to the classification of many areas of the province as mountainous.
> (Gramignani, E. 1965: 3)

Two things emerge from this report: firstly that as far as these provincial authorities are concerned the classification is essentially a classification of *economies*. It goes on to say that:

> *non vi è dubbio che l'agricoltura irpina è prevalentemente di natura montana.*
>
> there is no doubt that agriculture in Irpinia is by nature predominantly mountain agriculture. (ibid: 4)

Thus they point out that even though not all of the *comuni* in the province possess the precise physical characteristics (based on things like average height above sea level and gradient of slopes, etc) to be included in the category, the nature of their 'mountain economy' is such that they merit inclusion.

Secondly it emerges that inclusion in the 'mountainous' category is a practical matter of *economics* for the province. Exclusion from the category means exclusion from the benefits of laws that provide extra economic assistance for 'mountain' *comuni*.

It becomes clear, then, that this classification is not simply a matter of 'natural' or 'objective' categories but is in fact, most explicitly in this example, an arena of struggle for resources and for status. 'Mountainous' is not an 'objective' category but a *status*.

This kind of manoeuvring goes on in a number of other areas: attempts to have the class of roads in the territory of the province or of individual *comuni* upgraded or to have new roads pass through ones territory; attempts to be included in the category of towns regarded as *'maggiormente danneggiata'* (seriously damaged) by the earthquake of 1980; attempts to falsify population figures in order to avoid falling below the level at which fewer councillors are required for the local *consiglio comunale* - this was done by the *consiglio* of S. Angelo dei Lombardi, the worst hit town in the 1980 earthquake. Deaths from the earthquake threatened to cause the population to fall below 5000 at which point the council's membership falls from 20 to 16 and thus loses some of its influence.

Although the above examples all tend to be concerned with political manoeuvring to obtain economic benefits, in my view there is a wider cultural aspect to the issue. The strategies for inclusion in a particular category are not just about getting access to economic resources. They are also about status and identity. More precisely, the struggle for economic resources is itself a struggle for the maintenance or transformation of identity and social position since the extent to which a town or province is able to obtain these resources is a measure of its status. This ability will vary from area to area and will depend on the pre-existing position of the town within the various classifications. In the case of the Provincial Census Commission above it was expedient to attempt to be included in the most 'backward' category, to 'poor-mouth' in order to get access to resources. At the

same time this meant subscribing to the same classification - in other words, recognition and acceptance of backwardness and inferiority and the perpetuation of the position of the town. In my view this continued inferior position in the classification kept the province 'in its place' far more than the resources obtained from special laws enabled it to change.

The strategies adopted by Grottesi to deal with this classification in their everyday lives will be the major theme of the next four chapters. First of all it is necessary to return to the task of describing Grottaminarda.

3. Grottaminarda Today

Let us recapitulate then, on what has been said so far about Grottaminarda. It is set in a relatively low lying section of the Appenines and is one of several towns situated in the Valle Ufita. Since 1960 it has experienced two major earthquakes (1962 and 1980) but on both occasions it suffered no casualties. Nevertheless, extensive damage was caused to buildings, particularly in 1980. It has a population of around 10, 000 people which is growing steadily as the flow of emigrants slows down and immigration from other towns increases. It is situated along *the* major route between the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic coast in the southern peninsula - the autostrada between Naples and Bari. It has been transformed in recent years by the installation of a Fiat bus assembly factory in the Valle Ufita employing around 1000 people. Equally important to the formation of the town's income are state transfer payments which are received by over 20% of the population. Let us now look more closely at Grottaminarda itself.

3.2 Settlement Pattern

The territory falling under the jurisdiction of the *comuni* of Grottaminarda covers around 29 square kilometres. This territory is then divided, depending on size and location, into *frazioni, rioni* and *contrade. Frazioni* are generally speaking small hamlets or villages separate from the main centre but within the boundaries of the *comune* and which are too small to be considered as *comuni* in their own right. There is only one such in Grotta - Frazione Carpignano - which has a population of around 250-300 people. The *frazione* is equipped with all the necessary amenities of any small village - a primary school, several shops and bars, a restaurant, a large church, a petrol station, several motor mechanic's workshops. However, for most official purposes, for schooling beyond primary level, in many cases for work and to a large extent for entertainment, the people of Carpignano must go to the town centre of Grotta, or if the service they require is not available there, to other larger centres - Ariano, Avellino, etc.

The rest of the *comune* is divided into *rioni* and *contrade*. The former term generally refers to areas that form part of the urban centre, the latter, to areas of the *campagna* (countryside). In Grotta there are dozens of contrade and within the town itself many *rioni*. For the most part, the *contrade* are dotted with *case sparse* - houses dispersed throughout the countryside. The largest agglomeration of houses runs to around ten, usually built and inhabited by related families.

Again many of the services required by the *contrade* are available in the *campagna*. Commercial enterprises are dotted throughout, particularly at strategic points along main roads and on street corners. Grocers and hardware shops, bars, restaurants, petrol stations and garages are to be found as well as some larger enterprises related to agriculture or the construction industry.

In all, around 45% of the total population of Grottaminarda lives in *case sparse* or in Carpignano, while the the rest is concentrated in the *centro abitato* (residential/urban centre) with its various surrounding *rioni*. Thus the physical division between *paese* and *campagna* so often described in anthropological literature on the Mediterranean (Blok 1969; Davis 1968, 1969, 1973; Corbin 1979) cannot be applied with such ease to Grottaminarda. Nevertheless the cultural division between *contadini* (peasants) and *borghesi* (townsfolk) is extremely important as we will describe later.

While the town centre provides most of the services required by the *rioni*, each nevertheless has at least one shop selling food, hardware and other household goods (these shops are often described as 'minimarket' as well as a bar, and frequently also the workshop of someone who repairs and sells parts for scooters and motorcycles or a *radiotecnico* - television and radio repairer.

3.3 Layout of the Town

As mentioned earlier Grotta is uncharacteristic among its neighbours. It is not, like Frigento, Ariano, Trevico, Flumeri or Gesualdo, situated at the summit of a steep hill. In this it also differs from the accepted stereotype of the southern Italian hilltop town imprinted in the minds of all Italians particularly by the portrayal of Aliano in Carlo Levi's *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*. As a result, the long tortuous climb up a series of dangerously tight hairpin bends to the town centre has no place in a description of Grotta. On the contrary, I was surprised on my first visit to the town to find that the bus from Avellino rolled off the *autostrada* and almost directly into the midst of the urban centre, only yards from the main *piazza*.

The old mediæval *borgo* or *centro storico* (historic centre) is situated on a small hill. To the north and west this hill overlooks a steep but shallow valley bearing a small tributary of the river Ufita; to the south the old narrow roads descend from the ramshackle 11th century castle, the abandoned hovels of La Fratta, the earthquake damaged churches of Santa Maria Maggiore and San Michele, towards the Via Nazionale delle Puglie which is lined with the two-storey houses and one-time *taverne* of the 18th and 19th centuries (see Map 4, area 2).

Prior to 1960, the boundaries of the urban centre did not extend far beyond these two areas. Changes were made: an extra floor would be added to some buildings; others were knocked down and some new ones were built. However, the basic shape and size of the centre remained the same. Since then, however, the change has been enormous. On the one hand, the old centre has been transformed; on the other, there has been massive urban expansion with whole new *rioni* springing up on land that was previously *campagna*.

As we saw in Chapter 3 there were many reasons for this change of face (the national 'economic miracle', state intervention, etc). However, perhaps the most immediate cause, as far as local people were concerned, was the earthquake of 1962. Although no-one was killed the mediæval hovels of La Fratta and around the castle, having withstood numerous earthquakes since they were built, had had enough. Many collapsed and others had lesions and cracks which rendered them extremely dangerous. The two main churches had to be propped up by quickly erected stone buttresses and reinforced with steel and concrete inserted into bore-holes in the walls. Most of the houses in this area have since been demolished.

The whole area was completely abandoned and has remained so until today. Both churches are closed, the castle is crumbling and only a few new *palazzi* been built. With this change the town centre moved definitively to the area around the Via Nazionale. Here many new buildings have been erected and old ones repaired, and others lie empty awaiting confirmation of the state *contributo* (grant) for reconstruction. Along the main street the buildings have been almost entirely rebuilt. Another church and the *caserma dei carabinieri* (police station) were demolished to make way for the new piazza. Adjacent to the latter is the *Comune* or *Municipio* - the Town Hall - and along the section of the Via Nazionale, which runs through the town (where it is called Corso Vittorio Veneto or simply *il Corso*) are the principal shops and bars, the studios of doctors, other medical specialists, lawyers, notaries and other professionals. Many of these

professionals also live along *il Corso*. This is the focus of the weekly market and of the evening *passeggiata*.

At the same time as changes were occurring in the centre, whole new residential areas were springing up to the South of the Via Nazionale in the flat area overlooked by the new piazza. This area (area 3 on map 4) is earmarked for development in local plans. By the mid-1970s (after the hold ups in funding, etc) the first 'popular' housing to be built in the town was under way in Rione Dante (see map 4). At the same time, the haphazard illegal private development of Rione Chirico had also begun. These have since been added to by further developments in Rione Gelso, Rione Condotto and Parco Sciarappa (area 4) as well as continued construction within area 3. In each of these areas, services have quickly spring up - shops, bars, workshops.

However, these new *rioni* are not merely residential but are gradually assuming many of the functions at present carried out around the two central piazza. New commercial enterprises are opening up with increasing frequency and many of these are directed at the whole population rather than being merely the 'corner shops' found in other *rioni*. In addition several of the main administrative establishments have been moved to the area (the Post Office, the Consorzio Bonifica, the Social Centre and the Bus Station) and many more are in the process of being moved there to new purpose-built premises (The *Pretura* [magistrates court], a new *scuola media* [middle school], a hotel, fire station, health centre, unemployment office, library, *caserma dei carabinieri*).

Thus, the centre is once again in the process of shifting, although the area around *il Corso* remains, at least for the time being, the social and cultural centre - the place to be and to be seen.

3.4 House Type and Amenities

Looking at house types and the amenities they possess is another way of bringing out the contrast between pre and post 1960's periods. Prior to 1960 houses were constructed from cut tufa stone blocks with tile roofs. They ranged from the tiny one-roomed and windowless hovels of La Fratta in which the only extra space was a cellar for storage, to the larger two-storied *palazzi* and narrow terraced houses that ran the length of il Corso. They were generally speaking without electricity, running water, sanitary facilities or heating other than a fire or coals burning on a *braciere* (metal tray). Water was fetched from fountains and many people, including those of prosperous middle-class families,

spoke of using the slopes of the valley to the north of the *centro storico* as an open public lavatory until the mid-1960's.

By contrast almost all new houses and other buildings today are built with a frame of reinforced concrete, the gaps in which are filled with manufactured lightweight bricks to form the walls. These are then plastered over and painted. The roof is generally solid concrete. As well as this, most new houses are, put simply, *big*. There are more rooms and they are more spacious; there are more apartment blocks and they are frequently four or five stories high. There is a noticeable difference between the private houses and apartments of the middle-classes and the much smaller *case popolari* assigned to those of less substantial means - workers, artisans, the unemployed, etc. Yet the difference is one of degree and the *case popolari* still have *at least* two bedrooms, a kitchen and a bathroom. The vast majority of homes are equipped with electricity, running water, an electric water heater, a full bathroom suite and sometimes also a second W.C. A great many also have central heating, fitted kitchens, aluminium window frames and shutters, not to mention elaborate furnishings, automatic washing machine, the inevitable colour television and in some cases - not always related to wealth - a stereo system. Today the houses of the very rich are distinguished by the fact that they are often situated outside the town; usually they are large villas with (sometimes two) heavy iron fences surrounding them, remote control gate, a large garden, an outdoor swimming pool and large and vicious dog(s).

3.5 Public Services and Administrative Functions

To some extent we have already described the public services and administrative functions of the town and indeed more will be said in the next section on the local economy. However, it is necessary to spell out more clearly the nature and extent of these aspects of the socio-economic life of Grotta.

In terms of health, the population of Grotta is served within the town by at least ten doctors including the *medico condotto* (a state employee appointed by the local administration to provide a free service for poor families) and the *Ufficiale Sanitario* or Health Officer - another state employee who is also responsible for the neighbouring towns of Melito and Bonito in the field of public hygiene. These two officials operate together in a new local health centre. This *consultorio familiare* set up in 1981 also employs a health visitor, a gynaecologist, a social worker and a psychologist. However, although they are paid it does not as yet function. The main health centre (and hospital) for Grottesi is Ariano, ten kilometres away. Thus anyone receiving treatment from the *medico condotto* is required to go there to get an official stamp to validate their

prescriptions. As well as the above services there are, serving the *comune*, a school first aid clinic, a pre-natal clinic and a midwife (although again most mothers give birth in the hospital in Ariano). In addition there are two chemists and two private clinics for *'analisi'* - medical tests.

In terms of education, Grotta again relies to a great extent on Ariano which is the centre of a *distretto scholastico* (school district) consisting of eighteen *comuni* including Grotta. All the local *scuole materne* (nursery schools) are private, the biggest one being run by nuns. There is a large *scuola elementare* (primary school) which serves the whole of Grotta, together with a large annexe at Carpignano and several small ones dotted around the campagna. The single *scuola media* has only a small school role in relation to the number of children of middle school age in Grotta. The rest go to Ariano. A new, larger, scuola media is under construction at Grotta. However, building has been held up for some ten years now for legal and political reasons and its completion seems unlikely in the near future.

There are two *scuole superiori*, both of which are *istituti tecnici*. One is an annexe of the main school in Ariano. The other was built with American aid after the earthquake of 1980. The former school specialises in accounting, business skills and management, and chartered surveying. The *scuola americana*, as it is known, specialises in industrial electronics and computing. It qualifies pupils as *'perito industriale'* - industrial expert. However, only a few Grottesi attend these schools.

Most pupils instead go to various institutes and schools in Ariano, Mirabella and Fontanarosa. The first two towns both have a *Liceo Classico e Scientifico* specialising in Classics and Science. The five year courses prepare students for further education at University, particularly in Medicine, Law, Philosophy and Letters, Architecture and Civil Engineering. Then at both Ariano and Fontanarosa there are *Istituti Magistrali* which qualify pupils for primary school teaching or, if they go on to University, for middle and secondary school teaching. Finally, again at Ariano there is an *Istituto Professionale per l'Agricolturo* at which pupils obtain the diploma *'Agrotecnico'* - Agricultural Technician. This is not, however, a popular school and the vast majority of pupils go to the previous two types of school.

In terms of Welfare Benefits and unemployment, an *Ufficio di Collacamento* or Unemployment Office is situated at Grotta and this is responsible for all the *comuni* of the Valle Ufita and Alta Irpinia. It has the function of registering levels of unemployment and displaying available work. The task of paying out benefits and collecting

contributions is carried out by INPS - *Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale* (National Social Welfare Institute). Once again the nearest office of INPS is at Ariano but in effect anyone who wishes to have a claim dealt with has to go to the Provincial Office in Avellino.

Other services essential to the town have already been mentioned: the *Consorzio Bonifica Ufita* - the Land Improvement Agency for the Valley Ufita (including 28 *comuni*) has its headquarters at Grotta and is responsible for the administration of a considerable amount of resources. The *Caserma dei Carabinieri* has eight officers but they are under the command of the Ariano police force; there is a local magistrates court (*pretura*) at Grotta but, once again, the main law courts (*Tribunale*) are in Ariano.

Finally, we come to the local administration itself. The everyday running of the Town Hall (*il Municipio*) is, effectively, carried out by the *segretario comunale* and around fifty public employees, including clerks, an accountant, a surveyor, a draughtsman, etc, as well as janitors, school cleaners, cemetery workers and attendants, messengers, etc. However, the decision-making process for what actually happens is carried out by the 20 elected representatives on the *consiglio comunale* (town council). This consists of a seven member *Giunta* which in turn includes the *sindaco*, four *assessori_executivi* ('assessors' with an executive vote on the *Giunta*) and two *assessori supplenti* ('assessors' with 'supplementary' status on the *Giunta*).

For certain aspects of administrative life, the consensus of the whole council is required and for others the *Giunta* has executive powers. Nothing can go ahead without the signature of the mayor or that of his *delegato della firma* (literally 'delegate of the signature'). At the same time all decisions taken by *Giunta* and *Consiglio* are subject to approval by the provincial *prefetto* under the auspices of a *comitato di controllo* (control committee). A decision taken locally can thus be *bocciato* (overturned) usually over legality, but on occasion also under the terms of the *controllo di merito* i.e. on the basis of whether or not the Prefect regards it as 'appropriate' . (c.f. Colclough 1969: 122)

The *consiglio* is responsible for several crucial areas of social and economic life and each of the *assessori* on the *Giunta* is appointed to be in charge of one of these. Furthermore representatives are elected by the council to form commissions of inquiry into each of these areas. These usually include members of the public involved in a particular area together with party activists also so involved and other councillors not on the Giunta, including representatives of the minority. The assessorships (*assessorati*) created by particular administrations vary .

As well as keeping an *anagrafe* (registry) of births, marriages and deaths, preparing the electoral roll and recording residence and property changes in the Comune, the functions of the Town Council include:

1. The appointment, payment and functioning of *il personale* (i.e. communal employees). For each post that comes up a commission is set up to scrutinise applications, hold exams for and then select candidates. During my stay an *assessorato* was given over to this function.

2. *Lavori Pubblici* - Public Works - again there was an *assessorato* as well as a *commissione* to assess the town's requirements. The administration is here responsible for the tendering of contracts for the construction and maintenance of public buildings (schools, new Town Hall, etc), communal roads and street lighting.

3. Public Hygiene and Health - street cleaning; upkeep of the cemetery; ensuring that all commercial and productive activities are within the law in terms of hygiene and health; the provision of school meals; the proper functioning of health centres. During my stay this function was carried out by the *assessore alla cultura e alla sanità* (culture and health) with the former referring to the provision of and permission for entertainment facilities and events - fireworks, *feste*, shows, processions and, as we will see in Chapter 10, participation in a T.V. show.

4. The organisation of commercial activity - particularly of the weekly market; and the distribution of licences to sell. Again there was an *assessore al commercio* appointed to this area.

5. Agriculture - the maintenance of rural roads and the provision of adequate water supplies both for consumption and irrigation. Again an *assessorato* was devoted to this function.

6. Traffic control and Transport - the provision of public parking facilities; the regulation of traffic through the town centre; provision of a site for the bus station.

7. Finally, the most important function of all, particularly in this context of a *comune* hit by two earthquakes in the past thirty years: housing, urban planning and reconstruction. Within this category for which, during my stay, there was not only an assessorato but also *at least* three commissioni, the local administration has a great many powers and very large sums of money to spend: at least 11, 000 million Lire for

reconstruction alone (between £4-5 million). The council is responsible for the allotment of public housing, of land on which to build, of state contributions for repairs or reconstruction. In addition it is required by law to draw up detailed plans for the future urban development of the town.

4. Summary

As well as the basic geographical and infrastructural facts about Grotta described in section 3, the aim of this chapter has been to provide an account of the overall environment in which the town is situated. In doing so, it emerged that the seemingly natural categories that exist to form such a description are imbued with the decidedly social categories that identify different parts of the region as backward and modern. As we will see in subsequent chapters, Grottesi themselves use such categories in locating themselves in the social world, and in doing so they enter into a classification that is not of their own making and which involves them in the struggle for a positive identity since *a priori* it identifies them negatively.

Before looking in detail at how they deal with this in everyday life (in chapters 6-9) let us turn now to a more detailed account of the local economy.

CHAPTER FIVE

Grottaminarda Today: The Structure of the Local Economy

1. Introduction

Many of the characteristics of today's economy at Grotta will already have become apparent: the centrality of the State and the effects of its Southern policy manifested in the presence of Fiat; the resources available for public works and reconstruction and the effects of transfer payments in the form of pensions and other benefits and subsidies; the contribution of emigrants; the decreased importance of agriculture, etc.

However, an overall sector-by-sector picture of the contemporary economy has not yet been drawn and it is the purpose of this section to provide this.

As we saw in Chapter 3, up until 1960, the town was dominated by an economic and political elite - a small group of families of the gentry consisting principally of landowners and professionals. The majority of people were either peasants or artisans and shopkeepers. Land was the principal economic resource and the vast majority of people, in one way or another earned their living from agriculture.

The economy was undifferentiated with economic roles unspecialised. Commerce and handicrafts were intimately tied to the agricultural economy. There was a scarcity of work and no single source of income was sufficient or sufficiently secure to provide any single family with a stable livelihood. People took up a skill and practised it wherever the opportunity presented itself. Precariousness was thus a defining feature of the economy. In addition it was characterised by the relative isolation of the majority of the population from external affairs.

Today the simple distinction between gentry, artisans and shopkeepers, and peasants is no longer so easily applicable as the economy has become increasingly fragmented. And while it is true, as people often point out, that there is a degree of *benessere* (well-being, affluence), this is tempered by the fact that economic prospects are increasingly subject to influences and forces external to the community and beyond their control. Precariousness is still a defining characteristic of the economy - people must still

engage in the art of *'arrangiandosi'* - 'getting along', 'making arrangements' - while at the same time dependency on a much wider sphere of influence has increased.

The whole economic structure has become imbued with new kinds of relationships, new kinds of occupations with varied locations. The products people consume, the news they listen to, read and talk about, the fashion they follow, increasingly come from national and international sources.

Today people are involved in a far wider range of economic structures than the strictly local in all sectors of the economy. In the following sections I will look at each sector in detail.

2. Agriculture

In agriculture, the exodus described in Chapter Three has continued with the number of agricultural enterprises decreasing from 1097 in 1971 to 925 in 1981. At the same time the numbers active in agriculture have decreased from 872 in 1970 to 557 in 1981 (Istat 1986).

To an extent some of those still involved in agriculture have 'modernised' their enterprises, making use of machinery and introducing lucrative industrial crops like tobacco.

However there has been little consolidation of holdings, with the land released by the exodus simply falling into disuse or continuing to be cultivated in the same manner as before. The structural change or 'rationalisation' of agriculture, that planners and developers always see as a prerequisite for modernisation, has not occurred.

Hence there as been a decline in the 'SAV' (*'superficie agricola utilizzata'* or 'agricultural land in use') from 2 871 ha in 1970 to 2 283 ha in 1982. In addition 97% of this land is worked by *coltivatori diretti* who constitute 90% of those active in agriculture. There are no large farms in the *comune* run on a large scale commercial basis with salaried or hired labour. The average size of holding is 2.5 ha (1981) and this is little changed from the 1970 figure of 2.6 ha. In many cases holdings are smaller than this (often less than 0.5 ha) and frequently extremely fragmented (ibid; CCIAA 1975).

The number involved in each enterprise is difficult to ascertain. Usually, each will consist of a husband and wife with help from sons and daughters where available - although as should already be clear fewer and fewer young people are willing or are even

encouraged to make their living in this sector. In fact in 1971 there were more enterprises (1097) than people active in agriculture (887), a fact also noted by Ryan in Calabria (Ryan 1977: 69).

The vast majority of land is given over to cereals and fodder crops. As well as these, each farm usually produces some vines and olives and a wide range of vegetables and fruits. Crops are grown largely for home consumption rather than for a wider commercial market. As well as garden produce, most peasants also raise a number of fowl, rabbits, and perhaps some sheep and pigs. When this is not for subsistence all of this produce is sold locally. Twice a week peasant women line the corner of Piazza Fontana (see Map 4) selling fruit and vegetables, sheep cheeses, eggs, fowl and rabbits. Most of this produce is of a quality which cannot compete with the organised market gardening of the immediate hinterland of Naples and, moreover, comes to fruition far later.

However, more important to the local economy than any of these products is tobacco. This has proved to be a lucrative crop for many peasants despite the fact that it is produced on a small scale basis. Each family farm grows, picks and dries a small patch of tobacco and then sells it to one of the two processing plants in Avellino and Benevento. Some of this tobacco is used in the nationalised cigarette industry. However, much is sold in international markets and so these peasant producers are in open competition with the established industries of Brazil, Mexico, Texas, California and Spain. There is no doubt that tobacco has brought some measure of prosperity to many *contadini*, not only in Grotta but in the surrounding area and *all* Grottesi recognise that their standard of living has risen substantially in recent years. In 1985 the market for tobacco was safe, but there is no guarantee that it will remain so.

The state is intimately involved in local agriculture. As well as providing funds for infrastructural improvements (irrigation, drainage, the control of erosion, etc) over a third (570 out of 1 584 in 1985) of those in Grotta receiving state transfer payments were *coltivatori diretti*. In a population with around only 900 farms and, it would seem, even fewer farmers, this is a substantial proportion.

Despite the lucrative nature of tobacco growing, local agriculture is neither sufficiently stable economically nor sufficiently prestigious socially, to reproduce its workforce. It is seen to involve too much work for too little reward. It does not produce enough to feed and clothe everyone in a domestic unit. Children now cost more to raise and parents frequently point to the difficulties of meeting the demands of education and increased affluence.

Young people continue to leave agriculture, choosing instead to advance their education and seek a salaried post or to set up their own small business. Those who remain augment their income in whatever way they can from other sources and, as we have seen, the state is foremost amongst the latter. Thus the art of *arrangiandosi* goes on although the context within which people eke out an acceptable level of living has changed markedly. Precariousness has remained while dependency on the State and on wider markets has increased.

3. The transformation of commerce and handicrafts

The activities of both commercianti and artigiani in the pre-1960 situation were intimately bound to an agricultural economy. Although both these categories were slightly better off then the *contadini* no-one was particularly well-off and there was an excess of people attempting to make a living from commerce and handicrafts. Frequently they were, to all intents and purposes, unemployed. Socially, however, they had a higher status than the peasantry. They aspired to the lifestyle and values of the *borghesi* and joined in the *disprezzamento* (denigration) of the *contadini*. From their ranks were to spring most of the *intelletuali* (intellectuals) of the town and they were the first among the lower classes to recognise the importance of education and to put their children through schooling.

The exodus from agriculture in the 50's and 60's was accompanied by rapid changes in this sector of the economy. The intimate connection between agriculture and commerce was severed as land was abandoned and products imported from other regions were introduced. The local economy was opened up to competition from external markets and the *commercianti* and *artigiani* had to adapt. For the most part the latter went to the wall - they could not compete with the big northern companies producing cheap alternatives to their products on a mass basis. Many emigrated and took up their trade (or another) in South America or Northern Europe; many emigrated and took up whatever job they could find, ending up in factories, restaurants and hotels, building sites, etc. Others shifted to the expanding commercial sector and instead of making their own product, sold products manufactured elsewhere: *calzolai* (cobblers) opened shoe shops, *falegnami* (carpenters) opened furniture shops; *sarti* (tailors) opened clothes shops. A few artisan workshops remained and did not acquire the slick character of the new commercial enterprises. However, their function changed. They became repair and maintenance businesses rather than productive enterprises.

Everyone has had to adapt to the dictates of new markets. Those who were *commercianti* also had to change their enterprises to survive. The peddling of local products became less important as more and more *commercianti* moved into the retail sale of imported consumer goods. In addition to a plethora of *generali alimentari* (general grocers) there emerged dozens of retail outlets for household products - electrical appliances, hardware and plastics, televisions and radios, gifts, jewellery, stationery, clothing, etc. And in association with these came a new set of *'artigiani'* - electricians, radio and TV mechanics, several kinds of car specialist (engine mechanics, car electrics specialists, panelbeaters, etc), hair stylists, photographers, printers, dry-cleaners.

Another striking feature of the transformation of commercial activity at Grotta is in the entertainment business. As early as 1960, attempts were made to open a cinema and disco at Grotta. Although it failed, today such amenities are readily accessible to the young people of Grotta in the neighbouring towns of Mirabella and Ariano. Every Sunday morning a van would tour Grotta's streets announcing the film to be shown that evening:

> *Questa sera! Alle ore venti! Ne la Cinema Aurelia! Robocop... etc*
> Tonight! At Eight! In the Aurelia Cinema ... etc

Today commercial activity in Grotta is continually increasing. From a level of 127 enterprises involving 199 people in 1961, commercial activity rose to a total of 280 enterprises involving 501 people in 1975 (CCIAA 1975). This accounts for more than one third of all the active population in non-agricultural activity. Moreover, 245 of these enterprises and 416 of the people were small retail shops and bars with the majority of the former selling food, clothing, furniture and other household goods. Consequently retail trade is the largest single category of economic activity. Food shops and cafe bars are the most common. Not only have they flourished in the centre of Grotta, but each new built up area has at least one of these. There are at least 100 of these *generali alimentari* and *salumerie* and around 30 bars. Except for a limited (though important) range of local products (bread, some cheeses, cured hams and some biscuits and sweets) the vast majority of goods in these stores is produced by highly commercialised and capital intensive enterprises in North Italy or one of the southern cities. In addition many of the local products (except perhaps bread) have become items in a whole range of imported alternatives, some of which are cheaper and more popular. For the most part, the shelves are filled with the processed and tinned or packaged products that appear in glossy advertisements on national television networks and in magazines. Even some 'ultra-processed' products like 'Kraft' cheese and frozen convenience foods (e.g. Findus and Birds

Eye) are stocked by many stores. There was, of course, the inevitable presence of Coca Cola and Guinness.

Shop fronts and interiors particularly along the Corso and in newly built-up areas are a far cry from the unobtrusive character that prior to 1960 made the premises of *commercianti* indistinguishable from ordinary residences. Today most shops have large glass windows and doors with modern fittings inside. Many are laid out in self-service fashion and call themselves *'minimarket'*. Most also have stylish and brightly coloured plastic logos. There are also one or two larger scale *'Supermarket'* . However, these, like most other commercial enterprises, continue to be run on a small-scale family basis. Those shops which do not adopt this modern style are regarded by most people as *vecchio* (old) and *arretrato* (backward).

Some products continue to be sold in the 'traditional' manner. These are, principally, fish, and fruit and vegetables. The merchants of these fresh foods have not adopted the slick and stylish standards of the other *commercianti*. Due to their high turnover of stock they have less need for permanent premises or polished presentation. Thus, most of the local *fruttivendoli* (greengrocers) have only cellar-like premises for storage, outside of which they set up a stall each day. They buy wholesale produce at fruit markets in Avellino and Naples. Most double-up as *commercianti ambulanti* (travelling salesmen) with one member of the family who drives around the neighbouring villages and towns selling from the side of his lorry or setting up a stall on their respective market days.

Other such peddlers appear principally on market day: older *artigiani* selling handmade agricultural tools, ceramics and terracotta pots, jars and dishes. Some older people prefer to buy these products; others buy them because they cannot afford the expensive shop products. Overall, however, these artisan goods have become increasingly objectified as 'traditional craft' products, regarded as quaint but essentially useless.

Other peddlers include *contadini* selling cereals and pulses, chickens, rabbits, eggs, saplings of cherry trees or olives, etc. Joining their ranks at the market are those who sell 'old-fashioned' clothing - working clothes, thermal underwear and boots, plain and unfashioned. These contrast with a younger generation of commercianti ambulanti who dominate the Monday market. These merchants, coming from Naples, Salerno and Avellino town (and one or two from Grotta itself) deal particularly in the sale of modern clothes, shoes and other domestic goods (e.g. linen goods previously hand-embroidered by

women for their *corredo* [or trousseaux]). They arrive typically in a large Mercedes van and set up a slick stall which tends to do a rapid trade.

A striking examples of the transformation of commerce in Grotta are the shoe and clothes shops. There is at least one of each of these which stocks the most recent national popular fashions. The owners buy their products directly from Rome, Milan and Florence, but also from travelling middlemen who frequently specialise in distributing clothing with a particular brand name or *'marca'* - i.e. the signature or logo of a famous clothes designer. Thus the names Kappa, Lacoste, Gucci, Giorgio Armani and many others are familiar to Grottesi - not merely from television or visits to Rome and Naples, but because they are available in local shops - even if large numbers of people cannot afford them. Towards the end of my fieldwork a small but significant branch of the multinational chain Benetton opened up. Although this company is originally Italian, its thrust is international and in many ways it epitomises contemporary popular fashion in the West. Its presence in Grottaminarda, situated in the so-called backward Appenine interior of South Italy, testifies to the town's integration into the modern economy - and, simultaneously, the distance of the local economy from the productive process.

This distance can be seen too in the furniture trade. Here a number of dealers in furniture have emerged selling products manufactured in the North. Rather than keep a large amount of stock for which they do not have premises, they order goods for customers by catalogue. The items arrive in pieces and are assembled by the dealer. This trade is therefore low in skill and with a small amount of capital can easily be set up. Yet the market is saturated with such businesses making them very precarious. There is heavy competition from much larger dealers in other towns. In larger commercial centres like Avellino there are many large showrooms and warehouses which stock modern chic and stylish furniture - again frequently with designer names. People are increasingly willing and able to travel to these rather than be tied to local *commercianti* and to products they have not seen before buying them.

In other areas of consumer goods the story is the same. There are local dealers in televisions, washing machines, fridges and freezers, dishwashers, tumble dryers and the names of multinational companies appear once again: Grundig, Candy, Phillips, Zanussi, etc. Other elettrodomestici (household electrical appliances) are readily available - hairdryers, food processors, radios, stereo systems, etc. Again these are small and precarious family-run enterprises which frequently fail or close down. Numerous young men in the community set themselves up as car mechanics or radio and television repairers. However, they are frequently unemployed/underemployed and thus resemble in many

ways the *artigiani* of the pre-1960 period. Generally speaking they are on the look out for more stable employment - a permanent post in public administration or in a factory. Little is lost in attempting to set up a small business. At the same time, however, little is gained and making a living is thus extremely difficult. Most will quickly switch trade where an opportunity presents itself and/or take up other employment if and when it is available.

The biggest and wealthiest *commercianti* in the town are those who deal in cars and motorbikes, agricultural machinery or in materials for the construction industry. This last category will be dealt with in the next section. One of the most economically powerful families in the town are dealers in tractors and other agricultural machinery, while another has a Fiat car showroom. The latter is a small subsidiary of a firm which has showrooms in Avellino and Benevento.

The opposition between wealthy *commercianti* and precarious small businesses with low profit margins is something of a caricature since there is in the town a middle range of relatively stable, successful and wealthy *commercianti*. This group, made up of families from different backgrounds is regarded locally as one of the most upwardly mobile groups in the community.

Much of the above discussion of commerce and handicrafts has concentrated on the range of products available, their source and the nature of their presentation. This has served to create a picture of the environment in which people live and work and to demonstrate that the trappings of a modern affluent lifestyle surround people even if for many they remain unobtainable.

4. The Construction Industry

Perhaps the most lucrative economic activity to have developed in Grotta in recent years is the construction industry. In 1961 there were no extractive industries in Grotta and only one construction company employing four people. This, of course, does not mean that this one company built all the houses and public works in the town. Rather, it points to the kind of situation described by Davis (1973: 11-16) whereby building was organised on an informal basis. People tended to build their own house or have it done by a friend or relation. There were skilled *maestri* who were particularly adept at their trade but building was not their only skill. Thus there was no 'construction industry' as such at all.

This changed with the building boom that occurred throughout Italy in association with the 'Economic Miracle' in the late 1950s, but particularly with the

earthquake of 1962. Astute local speculators and entrepreneurs made use of government funds for infrastructure and reconstruction. The more recent earthquake of 1980 is likely to sustain this development for many years.

By 1974 there were 16 construction companies registered with the Chamber of Commerce; and in the 1981 Census 4 companies were listed under the extractive industry heading with 51 employees between them while the number of building contractors had risen to 21 with 156 employees. Add to these numbers all those involved more or less indirectly in the industry and a substantial proportion of the working population can be accounted for. Today, said one local, *"Grotta è un immenso cantiere di lavoro"* - "Grotta is one great big building site".

The industry has become a highly technical enterprise. It has developed its own productive network, most of which is owned by a small group of families who have made their fortunes from the construction industry. A whole new range of skilled workers and commercial outlets have developed: shuttering joiners, plumbers, heating engineers, plasterers, electricians, glaziers, stonecutters, wholesalers and retailers of building products and accessories including cement, sand, gravel, timber, preformed concrete products, bricks, glass, marble, floor and wall tiles, hand and power tools, aluminium, insulation materials, iron (railings and gates), bathroom porcelain, paints, varnishes, etc.

The main building contractors in Grotta have moved into the forefront of the political and economic life of the town. Closely associated with them are a host of specialist professionals and technicians: engineers, architects, surveyers, lawyers, accountants, etc. Those involved in construction thus span a wide spectrum of economic, employment and social categories.

Once again, in a very physical way, the integration of Grotta into the core is made manifest. The growth of the construction industry reflects directly the post-war change in the principal source of economic resources from landed interests to the State.

However, this points up the more problematic side of the transformation of construction: the industry is completely reliant on the continued flow of funds from the State. The 1980 earthquake ensured that this flow would continue for some time, but it will not do so indefinitely. This long-term precariousness is combined with the more immediate instability involved particularly for labourers in the industry. Here too there is an overabundance of labour and for those lucky enough to obtain employment conditions are extremely precarious. Almost all labourers are taken on on a casual basis, either

seasonally, for the duration of a particular job, or sometimes only from day-to-day. When they are laid off, for example over the winter period, it is usually the case that they have not been employed long enough in any single job to entitle them to any unemployment benefit. For the most part they are not insured against injury and they are not members of any union.

Only a small proportion of those who describe themselves as tradesmen in the building trade - plasterers, painters, bricklayers, joiners, etc - are established as such. Many more are, like the pre-1960 artisans, and like those in other sectors, simply trying to make a living in whatever way possible - *arrangiandosi*. They are capable of carrying out a wide range of skills and given the opportunity they will do so. In the same way, those who are established are also, like their predecessors, skilled in other ways. Therefore although any single individual concentrates on one trade, if the occasion arises and it seems worthwhile, he will apply his expertise in other areas.

5. Transport

Grotta, as local people continually stress, has been for centuries an important confluence of communication links. It has thus never conformed to the stereotypical image of the isolated internal village of the South. It should come as no surprise, then, in the contemporary period with the importance of the distribution of goods and the increased mobility of the population, that the transport industry has become a crucial element of the local economy.

Once again this economic role is manifested not just in the statistics (which show an increase in those working in transport and communications from 99 to 204 between 1971 and 1981) but also in a very visible, physical way: buses arrive and depart at all hours of the day; trucks and articulated lorries travelling between Naples and the North on the one hand and the heel of the peninsula on the other, constantly roll off the motorway and into the town to make use of the many services that have developed - filling stations, repair and maintenance workshops, tyre changing garages, a large scale 'car' wash. Some bars remain open for 24 hours to cater primarily for *i trainieri* (hauliers); and several streets near the motorway exit are lined with the articulated lorries of those who operate from Grotta or who are stopping overnight.

One of the most significant factors in the consolidation of Grotta's role as a *'nodo stradale'* or 'road junction' was the completion of the Naples-Bari autostrada in 1974 and more importantly the creation of the motorway exit at Grotta. This meant that although

the town was now by-passed and thus lost some trade from traffic that previously passed along *il Corso*, the volume of traffic on this route and the opportunities to cater for or become part of it were greatly increased.

Beginning first with the transport of people, the extensive bus service that operates from Grotta has become an important feature of the local economy and of the livelihood of many people both in Grotta and the neighbouring towns. Although there are some small private companies operating locally, the service is dominated by the provincial semi-state company, CTI (Compagnia Trasporti Irpinia). These buses are used extensively by local people and are very frequent at peak hours.The local services are used particularly by school children and people working in neighbouring towns or going to weekly markets, etc. They also provides a connecting role for those from other towns .

The same applies at provincial level. Many people, both Grottesi and otherwise, choose to leave from Grotta to get to the provincial capital Avellino - the service travels *via autostrada* and is thus much quicker. The main customers are those with regular jobs working in Avellino - particularly those in public administration, banks or other bureaucratic posts, but also those who work in the *zona industriale* of Avellino. The inter-provincial service - particularly that between Avellino and Benevento is poor.

Between Grotta and Naples there is a very busy and frequent service. Everyday at 6.30 am and at 8 am two buses leave Grotta for the regional capital, full of people going to work in schools, public administration, offices, hotels, hospitals, factories, or to University. These buses go direct to Naples, taking little more than an hour to get there. Others go via Avellino where there is a connection every twenty minutes to Naples. At 11am, 12am, 3 pm and 4.30 pm buses return directly to Grotta. The later ones are largely full of the same set of people returning from work. Some reach their destination at Grotta. Others take connections to Ariano, Frigento, Flumeri, the villages of la Baronia (see map 3). All had to come to Grotta to get to their destination and now they must return there before reaching home. It is generally agreed that this transport situation is directly responsible for at least part of the influx of people to the town in recent years.

Finally, it is important to mention 'La Marozzi', the plush, air-conditioned, tinted-windowed coach service that runs the whole length of the peninsula frequently stopping at Grottaminarda. Indeed there are four times each day when any Grottese can reach Rome in three hours on this service. These buses travel from Taranto and Bari to Rome and then northwards to Torino. On the first leg of this long journey from the South, Grotta is the last stop before the capital.

These details only account for those using public transport. Italy has a very high proportion of car owners and Grotta is no different in this respect. Thus, despite the well-used public system, there are many more people who use their own transport to travel to work in Benevento, Avellino, Naples and the surrounding area. Every morning streams of cars queued up to get onto the autostrada from Grotta and it was a simple matter to arrange a lift at any time to Avellino, Benevento or Naples.

These facts about public and private transport at Grotta are a direct testimony to the great mobility of the population and their involvement in social, economic and cultural systems that extend far beyond the boundaries of the local community. Let us look now at those employed in this sector.

Working as a bus driver for CTI is one of the few secure jobs obtainable locally. Employees have a fixed salary, security of tenure, they are insured and unionised, although the working hours are long. However, CTI account for relatively few jobs in the area. Most of those working directly in transport at Grotta are *autotrasportatori* (hauliers) or *traianieri* as they are known locally. I will now turn to look at their situation.

One of the consequences for the Italian economy of the political and economic choices made in the post-war period is the huge distributive network which transports produce throughout the peninsula. Successive governments have chosen to favour road transport as the fabric of this network rather than the railways. The industrialisation of the South from 1960 onwards together with the continued integration of the region into the national and international market for consumer goods brought opportunities for the development of the haulage industry. Moreover, the particular way in which southern industry developed - with subsidiaries still closely linked to their northern parent companies gave a further boost to this tendency. The opening of the *autostrada* and the exit at Grottaminarda created considerable opportunities for local people.

In the same way as so many others in the sectors of the economy already described, the vast majority of *trainieri* at Grotta are *'padroncini'* - literally 'little bosses' - self-employed individuals and families who, with savings from emigration, or with a bank loan, have managed to purchase a lorry and then found employers with goods to distribute. The kind of things transported vary considerably. Fresh produce is brought from the Puglia region - olives and olive oil, grapes, watermelons, etc. Some of this produce is distributed locally. Most is taken to Naples, Rome and beyond for export.

Employment transporting these goods is of course seasonal. Steel products from the two Italsider steel plants at Bagnoli near Naples and Taranto on the Adriatic Coast south of Bari are transported by Grottesi. Finally, one of the few developments to arise from the installation of the Fiat bus assembly plant near Grotta is that some local hauliers were employed to transport parts to the Grotta factory from various other factories - particularly Torino, but also from other southern plants (Cassino, Sicily, Lecce). In addition the finished products - i.e. the buses and coaches themselves - have to be transported to their destination. Consequently the *trainieri* are hired to take new buses from Fiat at Grotta to Torino or Rome and on the return journey bring back parts either to Grotta or to one of the other southern plants.

As pointed out to me by several Grottesi, and in accord with Amin's assessment of the recruitment strategy of Fiat in the South, (see Amin 1985: 180) factories like Fiat and Italsider are more disposed towards taking on these self-employed *'padroncini'* rather than having a permanently hired fleet of drivers and vehicles. They do not make the same kind of demands as the latter might in terms of pay and working hours since they are not unionised. Nor are they likely to become so since each is attempting to *arrangiarsi* by finding other work. Moreover, they insure themselves, and so it is their responsibility and not the factory's to stay within the legal requirements for weight of load and driving distances. Thus on the whole they are less of a risk, cheaper, more flexible and non-militant.

Many of those taken on by Fiat do not need to own their own lorry since the principal aim is to transport the finished buses to their destination. Many young men attempt to get this kind of work. They carry an HGV-type licence but cannot afford to buy their own lorry. The supply of such drivers far exceeds Fiat's demand and so, much like the day labourers of the pre-1960 period, they often remain without work. In the same way, also, they are employed on a day to day basis and even when they do succeed in obtaining work, the conditions are frequently poor. A young Grottesi in his twenties was told on arrival in Torino with a new Fiat coach, that there was nothing to transport back. He had to return to Grotta paying out of his wage for overnight accommodation, meals and even part of his bus fare home. He arrived at Grotta at 2 am and then reported to Fiat again later the same morning to see if they would employ him again.

As should be clear by now, it is in this area of the transport industry where, despite, or more accurately because of, the most recent effects of integration, the characteristic precariousness of the local economy and its dependence on external forces

reappears. Most local *trainieri* work long hours, well beyond the legal limit - *"turni di lavoro massacranti"* "killing working hours", as one person put it.

Some families have managed to profit considerably. In one case, starting with virtually nothing, a group of brothers gradually built up a fleet of lorries, took on a few workers and eventually managed to branch out into the construction industry by setting up a sand and gravel quarrying business. Another family created a more stable livelihood for themselves by using capital saved from years of haulage jobs to open one of the town centre's more popular cafe-bars. Another family who a generation ago were *contadini* with only a small amount of land have succeeded in developing a more stable and regular contract with Fiat for the transport of finished buses and parts. This has been successfully combined with, for example, bringing marble back from Carrarra for the three marble works in Grotta. Finally, another family whose *capofamiglia* was nicknamed Capiente also began with very little, building up a grocer's business (*fruttivendolo*), expanding to become *pescivendoli* (fishmongers) as well and then branching out to become *trainieri*. The nickname Capiente means both 'capable' and 'capacious' and indicates his prowess in the art of *arranginadosi*.

For the most part, however, the *trainieri* are from relatively poor backgrounds (peasants or labourers) and live an extremely unstable life, completely dependent on the vicissitudes of the market, with no protection from the State or a union. If production falls their source of livelihood is cut and in the case of both Italsider and Fiat this is a very real danger. In the case of Italsider the steel plant at Bagnoli was going through yet another crisis during my fieldwork and since then the furnace has been cooled down, thus closing the factory once and for all. Fiat's operations in the South are frequently in crisis also, and this is particularly true of the bus assembly plant at Grotta. Every year the Government threatens to withdraw the funds that support it. Very few buses were assembled while I was at Grotta and more often than not workers were laid off. However, while *they* received what is called *Cassaintegrazione* i.e. (almost) full pay from the State, the trainieri have no control over the situation and do not get paid unless they work.

6. The Coming of Fiat

The installation of the Fiat factory in the Valle Ufita, just a few kilometres from the centre of Grotta, has a significance for the local economy all of its own.

The decision to set up the factory, which was to employ 3000 people to assemble (single-decker) buses and coaches was taken by the Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning (CIPE) in 1974 as a response to the national problem of a rapidly deteriorating supply of buses in public transport. As an incentive to setting up the factory in the South the government was to subsidise the project heavily (see Pugliese, F. 1983: 110 for details). In addition, it would be the main customer for the finished product. For their part, Fiat were willing to participate in this arrangement not merely because of the incentives available but because of the disincentives of further investment in the North. This was a period (1968-74) when northern economic interests were at their keenest to decentralise production away from the problems of congestion and militant unions in Turin. The move to Grotta must be seen in the light not only of other investments in South Italy but also of decentralisation to other countries, notably Poland, Yugoslavia, Spain and South America (c.f. Amin 1985).

At the end of 1974, having obtained the consent of the local and regional authorities to go ahead with the project, Fiat reorganised the plans to a much smaller scale with a maximum workforce of 1500 people. Grotta thus caught the end of a period of investment in the South. This situation in which an investment is halved for reasons beyond the control of the people of Grotta is further testimony to the vulnerability and dependency of the local economy. In the end it was not until 1978 that the factory went into production with the greatly reduced workforce.

Since then, what has been the contribution of the factory to the local economy? Despite the scaling down, the size of the enterprise and the number of people employed are on a scale without comparison in any other sector of the economy. As we have seen, the vast majority of economic enterprises in the town are small-scale family affairs. Only two businesses in the town have more than 10 employees. The only larger employers are the local administration, the bus company, the fire brigade and the school authorities who employ around 250 teachers in the town. Some construction firms have several permanent employees. However, as we saw the majority of their workforce is hired when it is needed.

Thus, simply in terms of numbers, Fiat has a potential influence which is very great. At Grotta there are some 200 people who work in the factory and although this may not seem massive in a population of 10, 000, it nevertheless means that almost 200 families are benefitting from a fixed and secure wage of around £It. 1 million per month in 1985 - about £400. If the factory were to close it would have a profound influence on the welfare of these families.

Closure is a constant threat. Fiat have no real commitment to the communities of the Valle Ufita. If government subsidisation ceases, the company would happily pull out. Once again the dependency of the population on the wider economy is apparent. The economic spin-offs from the installation of the factory have been more or less non-existent. A factory making carpets for car interiors opened but lasted only a few months and has been closed down ever since. The construction industry benefited for a time as workers at Fiat chose to live in Grotta and the demand for housing, already high after the 1962 earthquake, increased. Commercial activity was given a boost. People now describe the factory as having increased the standard of living or having caused prices to rocket. Apart from these things, however, the only other *effetto indotto* was the creation of a few jobs for trainieri described in the previous section.

Pontarollo (1982) suggests that the recent upturn in the fortunes of the province of Avellino in terms of standard economic indicators can be put down to, among other things, the development of the Naples-Avellino area as a centre of the automobile industry. Fiat at Grotta reinforced a trend started with the setting up of Alfa-Sud at Pomigliano D'Arco near Naples; and with the arrival of another assembly plant just outside Avellino town - 'Arna' - a joint venture between Alfa-Sud and Nissan this trend will be continued.

However, in my view this was to some extent wishful thinking. By 1985 Fiat was going through another of its frequent crises while Arna had barely managed to get going at all and for all of my stay in South Italy was completely closed down.

Fiat does have some suppliers within the province of Avellino. However, these are rather small scale and mostly foreign enterprises and the items they provide are relatively insignificant in terms of the total input (e.g. ashtrays, window blinds, hubcaps, other fittings). It has to be remembered that the factory at Grotta is an assembly plant. The major mechanical processes are carried out elsewhere. The chassis is made at Termoli and the engine at Cassino by precision engineers. At Grotta the parts, mainly from these other factories and from Torino are simply put together and the buses finished, spray-

painted, etc. While I was at Grotta there was talk among some of the workforce - which had already been reduced to 1000 - of the introduction of robots for the spray-painting process since it was already in use in most other Fiat factories.

This situation conforms almost exactly with Amin's assessment of Fiat's most recent southern policy (he does not consider the Grotta factory). Thus, he acknowledges that it is inaccurate to say that Fiat in the South is totally reliant on goods produced in the North or in other Fiat plant. Nevertheless those suppliers which do exist are

> "dominated by a small number of exogenously owned firms. These . . . are not independent productive units but are, like Fiat investments, units which belong to large manufacturing industries which are themselves engaged in the process of restructuring and spatial decentralisation of production. Most of the locally owned firms which have arisen as a result of the Fiat investments are small family enterprises or businesses that are peripheral suppliers of Fiat. Moreover they are highly dependent on Fiat and have limited prospects of expansion."
>
> (Amin 1985: 189)

What has been the impact of Fiat on the workers themselves and on the occupational situation? Jobs at Fiat were much sought after due to the perceived stability and security of all permanent, salaried employment. Thus there was massive oversubscription when applications were requested by Fiat. As Davis pointed out in 1973 while describing the installation of a petrochemicals factory in Pisticci "the opportunities offered ... were judged to be far better than anything Pisticessi had ever know ... all other opportunities appear[ed] worthless by comparison." (Davis 1973: 156) Those who were, presumably, supposed to benefit from the investment (the unemployed/underemployed) were thus joined in competition for these jobs by everyone else who did not have a permanent post, and in some cases by those who already did. Moreover, these latter two categories were generally better placed politically and socially to secure a job at the factory. It is widely accepted that this is what happened. In some cases, it is said, people paid influential local people up to £It5 million (£2000) to secure a job.

Several workers returned from emigration to take up employment. In one case a man who had spent 18 years in Canada obtained a job in the factory and, in addition, set up (in his wife's name) the town's only fresh pasta shop and continued to assist his brother in the latter's panelbeating and respraying business. Another returned from Germany and as well as obtaining a job in the factory opened up a gift shop. A third returned with his family from England and while he obtained a job in the factory, his father became one of

the more regular drivers at Fiat . One worker, this time not an emigrant, told me that prior to working at Fiat he had been a mechanic locally:

> *"si guadagnava bene - molto di più che alla Fiat. Pero la gente non ti pagava in tempo, sempre faceva scusi. Mentre alla Fiat la paga è abbastanza buona - un milione al mese - ma soprattutto, arriva in tempo - è securo, hai capito?"*
>
> "You earned a lot - much more than at Fiat. But people didn't pay you in time, they always made excuses. Instead at Fiat, the pay's good enough - one million Lire a month - but above all it gets there in time - its secure, d'you understand?"

In practice, however, this man continued to work as a mechanic when he was not at the factory. There were also many people from peasant families working at the factory and in some cases they too continued to work the land. The continuation of second jobs was made easier by the fact that the factory was frequently in crisis and large sections of the workforce were laid off a lot of the time. During such periods they continued to be paid through *Cassaintegrazione* by which factories are kept going by the government taking over labour costs in periods when there is low demand for the product. Some resented this situation, particularly with respect to the *contadini*. The workers themselves contested the value of always being laid off, even if they were paid:

> *"La gente dice che ci fa comodo. Forse è comodo ma non conviene veramente, non è buono. Alla fine dei conti perdiamo. Perdiamo la tredicisima, perdiamo i contributi . . . dobbiamo lavorare di più per pigliare la pensione. Sono i soldi nostri."*
>
> People say that it suits us. Perhaps it's comfortable but it's not really convenient, its not good. At the end of the day we lose out. We lose the Christmas bonus [the 'thirteenth' - an extra month's pay to almost all those in permanent salaried posts at Christmas], we lose our [national insurance] contributions . . . we have to work more to make up our pension. That's our money.

For the most part, then, it can be seen that most people continue to be pluralists even when they do have a fixed salaried post. Perhaps this is not surprising when it is considered that really the future of the Fiat factory is rather uncertain. It has been relying for several years now on State subsidies for *Cassaintegrazione* and every year there are frantic local protests when an end to this finance is proposed. Usually the government pay up but that they will continue to do so indefinitely is again by no means guaranteed.

7. Public Administration, Bureaucracy and the Professions

In chapters 2 (section 2.3.2.) and 3 (section 5.2.) we saw that one of the most profound effects of the post-1960 integration of the southern periphery into the core was the burgeoning of bureaucratic and professional services and, concomitantly, the development and growth of an educational system which conferred the qualifications which were a condition of employment in this sector.

Both of these factors are plainly apparent in the statistics for Grotta: from 1961 to 1981 the numbers of local people employed in public administration and services increased from 287 to 433. In terms of the percentage of the active population this meant an increase from 7.8% to 19.8%. Those actually working at Grotta in this sector in 1981 (although not necessarily resident) numbered 450 with over 260 of these being employed in education (i.e. for the most part teachers). We have already seen that the numbers employed at the Town Hall increased from 28 in 1972 to 51 in 1981 (ISTAT 1983b). In 1985 there were requests to increase this by a further 30. The authorities agreed in principle to 20 of these posts.

At the same time, as stated, the *scolarizzazione* of the population has increased. In other words increasing proportions possess more and more educational qualifications. This can be seen in the table below:

Resident population over 6 according to level of education and sex

	Year of Census			
Level of Education	***1951***	***1961***	***1971***	***1981***
University Degree	30 *(3)*	46 *(7)*	73*(19)*	126*(42)*
Secondary School Diploma	82*(28)*	157 *(55)*	314 *(130)*	690 *(334)*
Middle School Leaving Certificate	95 *(23)*	175 *(25)*	471 *(158)*	1357 *(580)*
Primary School Leaving Certificate	2755 *(1058)*	3133*(1345)*	2324*(1004)*	2550*(1197)*
Literates without qualification	1570 *(756)*	1938 *(891)*	2182 *(1064)*	1699 *(891)*
Illiterates	2227 *(1583)*	1519 *(1128)*	1168 *(853)*	800 *(670)*
TOTAL	**6759** *(3451)*	**6968** *(3451)*	**6532** *(3228)*	**7222** *(3714)*

(Figures in brackets are females)

Source: CCIAA 1975; ISTAT 1984

The pattern shown, with huge increases in those possessing the *scuola media* leaving certificate is partly due, of course, to the raising of the school leaving age to 14 which in 1962 made the three years of middle school compulsory. However, the figures also reflect the growing recognition of the importance of school and university qualifications as a means of *getting* access to public posts. Moreover, they reflect once again the enormous influence of the State on southern society and its position as the major source of economic resources: not only does it employ large numbers of local people both in Grotta and outwith the community but also one of the main functions of many of its institutions is the distribution of these resources to other sectors of the population.

It is in State employment that the greatest security, so often lacking in people's lives, is found. Among the many benefits of a State post are a regular and high wage, health insurance for the employee and his/her family, easier access to credit, mortgage, etc; and shorter hours - most public employees are finished at 2 pm thus leaving them the rest of the day to cultivate political relationships, friendships or indeed to carry on a second job or economic activity.

More than this, such jobs are also politically secure. The employee is closer to the State purse-strings and thus is in a position to grant favours in a clientelistic way to those seeking access to these resources.

Those in the private sector - the *libere professionisti* (freelance professionals) including architects, surveyers, lawyers, engineers, etc together with banks and insurance companies - all rely more or less directly on State funds.

Today, the professional and public sector is no longer monopolised by a distinct elite group but draws on people from a wide range of backgrounds and from all strata of the community. Nevertheless, those who traditionally belong to this elite, do tend to occupy the highest bureaucratic and professional posts at least at local, and sometimes at provincial level. Economically, they are the most powerful families at Grotta and have a stake in several economic activities, often the most lucrative and prestigious in the town. Of particular significance here is a new savings bank set up by a number of these professionals. Many also live and work in the provincial capital or in Naples[1].

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[1]See Appendix 3 for profiles of members of this elite and their economic interests.

Joining them in this economic position (though only partly in the same status position) are the *grossi commercianti*, particularly one family who sell agricultural machinery and the principal families involved in the construction industry. All of these *commercianti* were involved in setting up the new Savings Bank.

However, the professional and public sector is extremely heterogeneous and despite the fact that it is recognised as the most secure sector to be in, it nevertheless has come to develop some of the insecurity and dependency found in other sectors.

Typical of this sector at Grotta is a broad and heterogeneous *ceto medio* (middle class) made up principally of teachers and officials in Public Administration and other bureaucratic posts. They work for the Post Office, the Tax Office, in hospitals, in the courts, the Chamber of Commerce, the Social Security Office (INPS - *Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale*), in banks, insurance offices, the Unemployment Office (*Ufficio di Collacamento*), the *Consorzio Bonifica Ufita*, the Water, Gas and Electricity Boards, on the railways, for the autostrada company, for Unions, in the Education Department (the *Provveditorato agli Studi*), for the several police forces and of course in the three levels of local government - comunal, provincial, and regional.

Most of those falling into this group commute to other towns to work using public transport or, frequently, sharing private cars. The intention of most people is to seek *spostamenti* (transfers) until they reach their home town. Thus there are also many people who, having won a national *concorso* or exam, have been initially posted further afield (to Rome, Milan, Bologna, etc) and who consequently have had to move away from Grotta. Their ultimate intention is to be transferred back. Conversely those who do work in Grotta are either local people who were initially posted elsewhere and who have succeeded in reaching their 'destination' or incomers who have been posted to Grotta but consider themselves as passing through and have no intention of remaining there for long if at all possible.

The Grottesi falling into this 'middle' category, have a stable and secure income which is high by the standards of many other sectors. Their jobs are ranked according to the qualifications required for entry. For example, the municipal accountant was required to have a *diploma ragioniere* - a secondary school qualification with specialisation in accountancy and was on a salary of around £It.2 700 000/month (i.e. £1000), an ordinary clerk needed only a middle-school diploma and was on a salary of £It.2 100 000/month(c.

£800). A messenger had only to have completed the *scuola d'obbligio* (compulsory schooling) and was on a salary of £It.1 500 000/month (c. £600).

Thus people in this middle stratum of professionals and public employees are from extremely heterogeneous backgrounds, and indeed are employed in many different areas. They are relatively wealthy and secure and tend to be involved or seek to be involved in local politics as a means of establishing themselves even more securely[2].

Again, however, this category does not exhaust the variety of people working in this sphere. Some of the jobs available are held by people who have little education, who are from less wealthy backgrounds, among whom upward mobility has not come so readily. Their jobs are lower paid and lower status. A large number of Town Council employees fall into this category: *bidelli* (school janitors/cleaners), *custode macello* (abattoir attendant) and *netturbini* (street cleaners)[3].

It should be stressed that precariousness exists even for those involved in the top professions - the *libere professionisti*. Many do not belong to the elite but more readily fit into one of the other strata described. Often they are from relatively poor backgrounds or are young and will be the first generation in their family to have received a higher education and gone on to set up a practice - whether it be legal, medical, or technical. They do not have an ascribed reputation, a ready-made clientele and an established network of influential friends and contacts. In this way, Davis' observation in 1973 that the insecurity we have described for other sectors of the economy, also present among the professional sector, is also true of contemporary Grottaminarda.

However, it must be stressed that the influence of the professional, public and bureaucratic sector on the local economy goes far beyond its effects on those employed in it. It dictates the economic behaviour of all those trying to get into it who constitute a very large section of the population. Competition for such jobs is acute and a great deal of energy is expended making or trying to make the correct political contacts that will lead to obtaining the necessary qualifications, leading to the necessary points, leading to the job itself.

'Tutto vogliono il posto' - 'Everybody wants a public post' and in order to get one *'ci vuole una spinta'* - 'you need a push' - i.e. from a helpful, benevolent and usually

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[2]See again Appendix 3 for profiles of this group.

[3]see Appendix 3

influential friend or relative. In the current economic situation where, particularly in the South, such jobs are massively oversubscribed, many young people are left waiting and only the lucky ones who have very influential contacts manage to get work[4]. There are numerous Grottesi in the former position. For much of the time they remain idle, living off their parents, unless they are able to find other temporary employment.

5. Summary

Two characteristics of major importance emerge from this account of the local economy at Grotta in the contemporary period: precariousness and dependency. The former has been a characteristic of the economy for years but has been reproduced recently through the particular manner of its integration into the core. Dependency is also a function of this process. Together with these structural characteristics, the *modernity* of the local economy is apparent. It is visibly made manifest in as number of ways from the fabric of buildings to the goods people wear and consume in their everyday lives. This then, is the economic context within which people's identity is defined.

[4]see Appendix 3

CHAPTER SIX

Sense of Place - the Family and the Life Cycle

1. Introduction

In Chapter Four, it was suggested that even the most basic and 'natural' categories available for describing the town's geographical, demographic and economic position within the region of Campania were suffused with the images and representations with which this thesis is concerned. *'Montana'* did not just mean mountainous but 'peasant', 'poor', 'backward'; it was not an objective category but a *status* within a loaded classification. It was shown that in very practical terms this kind of designation had crucial implications for towns like Grottaminarda in the struggle for economic resources.

However it was also suggested that there was a much wider cultural aspect to this struggle. The strategies adopted for inclusion within a particular category were not merely about access to economic resources, they were about social position and identity. Now while this particular example focussed on the strategies of whole towns to maintain or enhance their status, it must be recognised that this struggle is going on at many different levels, in different ways and in relation to a complex set of forces. Men and women, old and young, families, social classes, political parties and whole towns are engaged in this 'symbolic struggle' in their everyday lives, in their everyday social relationships. It guides and influences the decisions they make and the things they do.

It is the purpose of the next four ethnographic chapters to describe the nature of this everyday struggle. The process of integration transformed Grottaminarda. However, as seen in the last chapter, the precariousness of the past has remained and dependency on wider spheres was increased.

It is in this context that the images and representations of backwardness and modernity have been brought directly into people's everyday lives. They are manifested precisely in the changes which we have been describing in the previous chapters and are presented to and reproduced by people daily: the spread of the media and popular culture - fashion, television, magazines, films etc.; the availability of consumer goods (which are not merely goods but signs and symbols embodying the values of the core culture which produced them and which seeks to sell them); the increased importance of education which inculcates values not always consistent with 'traditional' ones; emigration

involving direct experience of different lifestyles and of being set apart and then relaying that experience back on one's return; State intervention which draws people into a centralized system over which they do not have full control; which makes it necessary for them to leave their communities; which sets limits to their response to the demands of modernity; and which embodies 'core' assumptions about what the periphery 'needs'.

How then do people deal with this situation? What strategies do they adopt in their everyday lives to maintain or attain a particular social position or identity ? Stated briefly, peoples response will depend on the specific relationships in which they are involved and on the particular context. It will be more or less explicit, more or less self-conscious but ultimately, as stated in Chapter One, it will depend, not on any principle of maximization nor on the mechanisms of the system but on an embodied sense of place, a practical knowledge and recognition of what is appropriate to particular relationships.

In Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, I will look at the way in which people position themselves in terms of class and status, and politics. This chapter will look at the arena of familial relations and the life cycle. The aim through out will be to focus on the way in which these relationships have been influenced by the complex of images of backwardness and modernity.

2 . The family and the life cycle

2.1. A Natural Institution

Early in my fieldwork I was invited to eat with a family who later became good friends. The Feast of All Souls or *Tutti Morti* had just passed and having observed me attend and observe the local celebration of this Feast, they asked whether it was an important day in Scotland too. I replied that only Catholics treated it with special significance and that the 5th of November was a more significant day. When asked why, I gave a cobbled version of the story of Guy Fawkes, telling them (erroneously) that his attempt to blow up Parliament had ended in his being burned at the stake. The grandmother of the family who had seemed moved and rather perplexed by this story turned to me and said:

E la Famiglia? Furono bruciato pure loro?

And his family? Were they burned too?

All present collapsed in laughter and as each detail of the story was retold and she was gently ridiculed by her family, the reasons for the hilarity emerged. Not only was her personal concern for the welfare of Guy Fawkes' nearest and dearest inappropriate for an event that took place 400 years ago, but also the fact that from all the possible responses to such a story, her ingenuous reaction had been one which pointed up to perfection the paramount concern of their society. 'Only in Italy' could such a response have been generated. It showed that for her Guy Fawkes was a nobody without his family. She was not interested in the British Parliament, the stability of the State or the possibility of Revolution or even in British customs, but in the one person with whom she could identify and with that aspect of him which for her identified him as a person on the first place - his family.

This may seem like making a an awful lot of very little. However, it demonstrated for me the paramount importance of the family. The family is the principle idiom through which people are located. In attempting to identify who is being discussed in a conversation, people use family connections first and only other criteria (employment, residence, political allegiance) if absolutely necessary. In finding out who I was, people would ask:*"Di chi siet'?"* (Of whom are you?) or *"Di chi sei figlio?"* (Whose child are you?") or *"A chi appartieni?"* (To whom do you belong?). In other words people wanted to know who my family were and not who I was or what my name was or my occupation or where I was from. Some were astonished that there was no local connection and horrified that I was in Grotta without my family.

The family is an immensely important institution, the taken-for-granted point of reference in positioning people in society. It is essential to an individual's identity that he or she should belong to a family. All of this confirms the situation described by anthropologists studying southern Italy in the 1960's and earlier (Davis 1973; Colclough 1969; Chapman 1935).

2.2. The organisation of the family

For most people, the term *la famiglia* refers to all those with whom they share a household or have done so in the past. It thus most commonly refers to the nuclear family since this is the most frequent type of domestic group. However the range of reference of the term varies according to context and to the position of each individual in the life-cycle. Generally speaking it refers to close kin (children, parents, grandparents, siblings, and siblings' children), as distinct from the wider network of *parenti* (relatives).

Although the nuclear family is the predominant type of household in Grottaminarda and indeed the ideal, it is by no means the only type. While it is considered normal and desirable for a newly married couple to set up a new household, in a great many cases this does not happen, and even when it does, they continue to live in such close contact, particularly with parents, but also with siblings, that the boundaries between units are frequently blurred.

When a family has the means it will plan the building of new houses to accommodate more than one unit. Thus 2 brothers who owned a marble works in the town built four flats above the workshops so that each had one flat and two more were available for the families of their married children.

There are other examples which show even closer association between units. For example, T.R. owns a *Tabaccaio* . Above the shop are two flats: T.R. lives in one with his wife and two children while his elderly and infirm mother and her sister live in the other. However, for practical purposes all the activities except sleeping are carried out together - working, cooking, and eating and cleaning - allowing of course for the sexual division of labour.

Many families do not have the means to provide new accommodation for their offspring at marriage. One family live in a two-bedroomed *casa popolare* . The parents have one married daughter living in a house provided by her husband's family. However they also have two more sons (one of whom is married with a young child) and an unmarried daughter of 25. Due to the fact that the married son is unable to obtain work on a permanent basis the parents have to accommodate and feed *his* family too. This arrangement was manageable while his other son was doing his military service - *il militare* . However, when he returns, things will be more awkward:

> *"Mia figlia dorme con noi, mentre mio figlio e sua moglie c'hanno l'altra stanza. Quando viene Giovanni, deve dormire nella cucina,*

vicino al frigorifero! Beh! C'aggia fa' Michele? Per i figli si deve fare sacrifici!"

"My daughter sleeps with us while my son and his wife have the other room. When Giovanni comes he has to sleep in the kitchen, next to the fridge! What can I do, Michael? For your children, you have to make sacrifices"

There are a great many adult children married and not married who continue to live with their parents in this way. No provision is made for them in the State Welfare System unless they have worked for an extended number of years. Many employers take advantage of this situation by only employing labourers for a limited period beyond which they would have to pay insurance contributions. Thus it could be said that both State and employers take the family for granted in this situation.

2.3. Families and work

The family exists in Grotta for its own sake. It has no other purpose than to reproduce itself. It is not some ideological epiphenomenon through which economic and political ends are achieved. Rather it seeks, with varying degrees of success, to organise economic and political activities towards its own perpetuation. They are put to the service of the family rather than *vice versa*.

The principal role of the parents and the sole purpose of work is to raise and provide for children and set them up in married life. In other words to perpetuate the family, together with its reputation. Where possible some aim to improve on the economic circumstances that they themselves were brought up in. In the last example, unable to provide his son with a new home, the father continues to house and feed him until he is able to fend for himself and his own family:*"Mi spezza il cuore se non potessi far mangiare a mio figlio"* - "I'd be broken hearted if I thought I couldn't feed my son".

The emphasis was always on making sacrifices for one's children. This is in keeping with the general image of work not as something desirable or good in itself, but as toil, labour. The most commonly used term for work - *'fatija'* (*faticare* in Italian) means precisely to toil or labour, to exhaust oneself through work.

2.4. The Life Cycle

2.4.1. Birth and Childhood

Today in Grotta nearly all children are born in hospital either in nearby Ariano or in Avellino. The pregnancy is carefully followed by frequent visits to the gynaecologist. Each woman visits the same doctor throughout. The couple are shown the foetus on a scan and may even, later on, find out the sex of their child before it is born. One woman said:

> *Molti lo fanno però secondo me è brutto, non sembra giusto.*
>
> Many people do this but in my opinion it's horrible, it doesn't seem right.

On another occasion a young father to be gave me a long discourse about how wonderful it had been to see his child in the womb -*"E` la cosa più bella che ho mai provato"* - "It's the most wonderful thing I've ever felt". Parents thus have full access to the modern antenatal technology available.

When she goes to hospital to give birth a woman is accompanied by a close relative - preferably her mother or a sister and sometimes her husband. However, babies are born in the presence of doctors (usually male) and nurses and with the mothers' legs in stirrups. Afterwards the mother and child remain in hospital for 24 hours if there are no complications. This is in contrast to the situation in Grotta 20-30 years previously when the majority of babies were born in the home, usually in the presence of several female relatives and a midwife who may or may not have been the one employed officially by the Town Hall.

A child's earliest moments are spent predominantly in the presence of women. Female relatives follow by telephone the progress of a daughter, sister, sister-in-law or a niece in labour and the return of the mother and child is greeted with great celebration. The child is passed around everyone present and all are invited to comment on how beautiful he/she is.

Anthropologists in southern Italy have frequently observed the greater value attached to the male children in relation to the virility of the father. Such generalisation cannot be made about Grotta. Jokes were frequently made about individual men who, with five daughters, had given up trying to have a son. However, the overall attitude was light-hearted, joking. No aspersions were cast on the virility of the father; no-one showed any serious disappointment at the birth of a girl. Whenever the preference

for male children is discussed it is usually dismissed with phrases like: *"Sono usanze vecchie"* "They're old-fashioned customs" ;*"E` una mentalità arretrata quella"* "It's a backward mentality, that."

In this way people distanced themselves from what they saw as backward behaviour. Greater emphasis was placed on personal preference - what a couple happened to think would be nicer. One father said of his newborn baby:

> *Io sono contentissimo. Dicevo mesi fa che preferirei un'altra femminuccia"*
>
> I am very, very happy. I said months ago that I'd prefer another little girl

Thus, while not entirely unimportant, the child's sex at birth is not a major focus of attention. Instead people are conscious that such thinking is seen to be *incivile* , particularly in the wider arena.

After a period of around fifteen to twenty days, health and weather permitting, the child is taken to be baptised. This is the formal ritual of acceptance into the community. Although one or two communists in the town claimed that they would not baptise their children, just as they claimed they would not get married in a Church, few actually stuck to these principles in practice - if only because they wished to avoid gossip.

Baptism normally takes place on a Sunday and may or may not be incorporated into the Mass. A small group of close relatives together with the godparents attend the service. The Baptism is also of course the official naming of the child although most couples decide well in advance what they are going to call their child. Indeed this was the reason one person gave for wanting to know the sex of the child before it was born. Naming practices at Grotta are an interesting example of the implicit concern people have in everyday life for their position in relation to images of backwardness and modernity.

Traditionally children are named after one of their grandparents or after one of the patron saints of the town-San Tommaso, San Rocco or Sant' Antonio. Guiseppe/ina,Giovanni/a, Francesco/a are also common as are a number of other religious names: Salvatore, Pasquale, Concetta, Angelo/a, Immacolata etc.

However there are certain instances of naming which are particularly significant. In one case a man called his daughters (now 8 and 12 years of age) Riger and Moira. The mother did not know where names came from. They were her husband's choice and she agreed. In other cases children were called Naike, Ruben, Walter, Henry. In this

last case the reason was clearer. The parents had been in America in the 1950's for many years and sought to give their child a name which would be acceptable there and also earn them some prestige back in Grottaminarda. In the case of Naike the father simply said: *"Mi piace"* - "I like it". This use of completely foreign names displays a desire of individual couples to distance themselves from what they perceive to be backward. This was one 'symbolic statement' among others through which couples indicated their desire to accept a certain style of living which they perceived to be modern. The choice of name was not explicitly expressed as such but nevertheless this was, in my view, its significance.

Following the official ceremony there is a large *'festa'* to which a much wider circle of *parenti* are invited as well as neighbours *(vicini)*, friends *(amici)*, the priest who performed the ceremony and any important people of influence who can be prevailed upon to attend. As on all such occasions the guests are given a large meal. Sometimes this is held in a hotel.

The development of the child in the early months is followed very carefully and closely by both parents and close relatives. Fathers are increasingly encouraged to participate in the early stages also. One woman praised her husband volubly for the way in which he had assisted with everything when their first child was born and she herself was ill. At the same time she lamented the fact that he had ceased to be of much help once she had recovered. Both parties explicitly stated that it was right and proper that the man should help out in this way so that even if this did not happen in practice the traditional rigid separation of domestic labour is not taken for granted.

Frequent visits are made to the doctor and every detail of the growth of the child and its actions are monitored and interpreted. Arguments and anxieties frequently arise between the mother and other female relatives who are in most frequent contact with her - usually the mother's mother or *suocera* (mother-in- law) or a sister. In one case a young mother's *suocera* told her that the way in which she held the baby would cause its head to develop abnormally. She would not be reassured about the matter until another visit from the doctor had been made.

All reactions of the child towards people, objects, food etc. are talked about and debated upon. Other examples of this careful and caring monitoring are striking demonstrations of the way in which people respond to the kind of situations produced by their integration into wider spheres of action. One case in particular brings out clearly the way in which family ties are bound together even more strongly, almost by necessity.

On an everyday basis *signora* A. looks after her two grandchildren while her own daughter is at work in the post office. She is assisted in this by the children's paternal aunt and by another of her own daughters, a Law student at Naples University. Arrangements exist whereby the two children are cared for at all points in the day. Frequently they end up staying at their grandmother's or just as often the latter stays at their house. However things go much further than this. Signora A. has five daughters and one of them, a public employee in Bologna, gave birth to her first child. Immediately arrangements were made for signora A. to go there to help look after the child and since then the Law student has moved to Bologna to take over this task. It would be possible in Bologna to use a childminder but this is not regarded as a desirable alternative.

The point is that this stage of the child's life is seen as crucial and demanding of the attention of the whole family. Although I have stressed that the circumstances, (which are themselves a consequence of the process of integration) draw the family together, the point is not so much that the mother was enabled to continue working, but rather that the new child should be surrounded by people, particularly women. It should be brought into the community not only of its own parents but also the community of relatives and by extension, society as a whole. It was an act of inclusion.

As children grow up, this process of inclusion continues and diversifies particularly along lines of sex. This is apparent, of course, in dress - girls in little dresses, boys in shorts and T-shirts; girls in pink/pastels; boys in blue and/or bold colours. Children are showered with presents from relatives on birthdays, namedays and frequently when their parents visit relatives. Grandmothers and other female relatives continue a production line of knitted clothes that began with the pregnancy of the mother. Mothers often complain that this is a waste of time since there is never time for the child to wear each item before it has grown out of it. It is nevertheless another way in which the relationship is established. Mothers dress their children carefully in these clothes before visits telling the child who made them. Then on arrival:

Mother: *Fai vedere a nonna la tua maglia..*
Go and show granny your new jumper.

Granny: *Uuh! Che bella maglia! Dove l'hai pigliato?*
Oh! What a lovely jumper! Where did you get it?

Mother: *Si! Te l'ha fatto nonna, vero?*
Yes! Granny made it for you, didn't she?

Children are thus constantly reminded of who gave them what and consequently obtain gradually a sense of their own position in relation to different relatives and friends. Other gifts increasingly become differentiated according to sex as the child gets older although in the early stages there is little difference. As might be expected boys are not seen playing with dolls while girls are discouraged from playing with toy trucks and cars.

They are encouraged to play games, make mock and real telephone calls, to watch television and to sing songs they hear regularly - these are often television advertisements. Again , in relation to gifts, they are encouraged to have a sense of owning things from a very early stage. However this means being taught both to give generously and to guard jealously. On one occasion a grandmother demonstrated to a friend how jealous her granddaughter was by deliberately stirring her up into a furious rage against her cousin (of similar age - 2), saying that the latter had taken her ball and she would never get it back. The adults were greatly amused by this reaction and by the negative responses to questions of whether she liked her cousin or not on subsequent occasions.

Parents and other close relatives take young children on the evening or Sunday *passeggiate* where they are admired and spoiled by friends and other *parenti*.. They are passed from person to person, given ice-creams and *pizzicotti* (pinches) on the cheek. Again this establishes their presence in the community and reinforces the specific relationships with those in charge of them.

Another feature at this early stage was the recognition of the expense incurred by children - particularly the cost of clothing them to the increasingly high standards expected and manifested in some of the popular modern shops situated along *il Corso*. Moreover, the future cost of education and of generally getting children set up is very much on people's minds early on.

Most children begin *scuola elementare* (primary school) at the age of about six, having spent 2 or 3 days a week at the *scuola materna* (nursery school)for the previous two

years. There then follow 5 years of primary school until the age of 11 when *scuola media* begins. Many parents, pay to have private tuition for their children so that they can enter primary school at the second level. Some do not pay at all but use their ties of friendship and influence to insert their children unofficially in a state school a year early so that they get a head start on their contemporaries. Thus the race to get qualifications and then make use of them begins at a very early stage

Teaching in reading, writing and basic sums begins almost immediately. Both parents follow closely the child's progress at school and mothers in particular make sure that homework is done before play. They are interrogated on what they have done at school. Some children are given expensive toys to assist them with their learning. In one case a couple gave their two children of 7 and 9 a voice sensitive toy which taught them to spell. They would say a word and then spell it on a small keyboard and their attempt would be shown on a tiny screen. If it was correct then the voice would declare *guisto!* (correct) in a happy cyberman voice and play a celebratory refrain. If it was wrong the machine would intone *hai sbagliato!* (wrong) and play a few doleful notes. These children also had a selection of video games with which to amuse themselves. This was a common feature in many families with young children.

As we will see later also, television plays a relatively major part in people's lives being on (although not necessarily watched) nearly all the time. Among children of primary school age the most popular programmes were *'Charlie's Angels'* and *'The A-team'* which were on each day on one or other channel. Popular also were a series of Japanese-made cartoons - usually childhood romances - which were, as several people pointed out, glorified and prolonged advertisements for a series of products - toys, books, stickers stationary, sweets - which were widely available throughout Italy and not difficult to find in Grotta. Inevitably all children of this age wanted these products as soon as they discovered them in the shops - and frequently got them. The parents were not particularly taken by them but for the sake of a quiet life bought them.

Children are taught to read, write and speak standard Italian, a thing which until that time many children have not done a great deal since their parents speak the local dialect. However among many families there was a conscious effort to ensure that the children spoke only 'correct' Italian from the outset. This often went to the extent of reprimanding the child if he or she lapsed into dialect or made a grammatical error in Italian. In one family all the close relatives of the children (parents, grandmother, parent's siblings) were extremely attentive to their speech, picking them up on every

little mistake. The father explained that he did not want his children to learn dialect at all:

> *Vedi, Michele, questa zona è sviluppata a balzo, cioè non è stata grduale lo sviluppo ma è venuto tutt'un colpo negli ultimi venti anni. Allora, se mie figlie parlano il dialetto non faranno bene a scuola ... devono parlare italiano correttamente per sopravivere in questo società cambiata, sviluppata. Fra dieci anni non si parlerà più il dialetto. Mi piace il dialetto, è bellissimo, lo parlo sempre insieme ai miei amici, però oggi non è più pratico.*
>
> You see, Michael,this area has developed in one jump, that is development hasn't been gradual but has come all at once in the last 20 years. So, if my daughters speak dialect they won't do well a school ... they have to speak Italian properly to survive in this changed, developed society. In ten years time no-one will speak dialect. I like dialect, it's beautiful, I always speak it with my friends, but today its no longer practical.

I suggested that they could perfectly easily be bilingual but he insisted that they would end up being bad at both. Interestingly this man in fact spoke dialect to everyone in the family (except myself and his daughters) and his wife and other relatives did likewise. Quite understandably then, his daughters picked up a great deal of dialect although they were discouraged from using it.

The above statement shows a clear awareness of the changes that have influenced Grotta over recent years. It quite clearly categorises local dialect as a thing of the past - *arretrata* - and correct Italian, the national language, as a thing of the present and the future. In relation to the family, it shows once again the emphasis parents place on the long term future of their children. The explicit message here is that localism is not going to get them very far.

A child's primary school teacher is acknowledged to be a very important influence on his or her life and depending on their relative position in society, teachers and parents spend a considerable amount of time developing their relationship. The children of rich and influential parents are cossetted by teachers while parents of more humble backgrounds fuss over their child's teacher. Where they are of equal status parents and teachers often move in the same social circles and the authority of the teacher is recognised and accepted.

By the age of 7 or 8 children are approaching the next major life-cycle ritual - First Communion - although most do not receive the Sacrament until they are nearer 11. By this time they are also much less dependent upon their parents, siblings and other

older people and have made their own friends. School is a particularly important environment for this process.

They now go out to play on their own although always under someone's watchful eye and with strict limitations on where they can go and what they can do. In addition all homework and household chores must be done. This latter applies primarily to girls although a boy will be expected to assist his mother if he has no sisters. However, boys are usually regarded as incompetent in such matters and any praise for such assistance always goes to girls. I frequently heard mothers of girls of this age praising them for their efforts and telling them what good housewives they were going to make (or indeed chastising them on how bad they would be).

Young boys roam about in groups of 6 or more usually playing football at an appointed place in the street or one of the *piazze;* or getting up to mischief. Setting off firecrackers was a favourite pastime especially around the time of *Carnevale* (see Ch. 9). Girls are not prevented from going out but do so less and tend to stay in groups of twos and threes, walking around with their arms around each other's shoulders or playing and sitting around the swing park below the main *piazza.*

Another preoccupation of girls of this age is marriage together with all the things that they have been taught go along with this: being a bride, wearing a white, flowing dress and a veil, the wedding ceremony and of course, having babies which for them is the immediate result of marriage. Questions would be fired at newly-wed sisters and aunts on these matters and they would have dressing-up sessions with their friends each eager to play *la sposa* (the bride)

An opportunity to look like one and act the part to an extent comes with First Communion. This ceremomy is one of the most important rituals in the life-cycle. It is the ceremony of the full incorporation of each person into the religious community and as far as the faithful are concerned, literally into the Body of Christ. Leading up to the ceremony the children undergo a period of instruction in school with their own teacher and the parish priest, Don Rocco, who visits the various schools. In addition there are several sessions which both parents and children are expected to attend - although most do not. In fact the interest in these sessions and in the overtly theological or doctrinal aspects of the ceremony are relatively low, being confined to those mothers who are zealous in their participation in all Church events and equally insistent on the attendance of their children. In addition only rarely did I hear parents other than these following up on the

religious instruction given in the school. As we will see the emphasis tends to be on the social side of the ritual.

All those who had been prepared took part in one of two religious ceremonies over the two weeks. These began with a procession from the school to the church. Since all churches have been closed for reconstruction since the 1980 earthquake and the pre-fabricated replacement was too small to accommodate everyone, the ceremony took place in the newly built social centre. The children walked slowly along the road in two separate files - boys on the right and girls on the left, carrying white lilies. Each girl wore a long white dress and headdress. Within the basic format of this dress there was a great variety of style and detail; of quality of material; and of provenance. Most were of the flouncy,frilly type typical of bridal dresses, with several layers of nylon material. Some were made by the mothers themselves or by the local *sarti*, or had been bought from bridal shops in Grotta, Ariano or Avellino.

Less emphasis was placed on the boy's clothing although each was again immaculately turned out mostly in neat little men's style suits or jackets and trousers together with white shirts and bow ties.

The procession was led by the priest into the church with the children behind being encouraged by their teachers to sing a hymn they had prepared. However this was barely audible due to the noise created by the onlooking relatives and parents who also distracted the children by calling and waving. The video cameras were the main distraction however. For every child taking part there was an attached male relative with a video camera desperately trying to get his subject to look at him. In fact at the subsequent party for one girl the cameraman complained all day that his niece had not looked at him the whole time despite his exhortations.

As the children filed into the Social Centre and took their places beside the makeshift altar, they were followed by the various filmmakers and a horde of relatives and friends and onlookers In no time the aisle was blocked as the determined film makers struggled to reach the front to get their footage of the children at the vital moment of the ceremony - the Eucharist actually passing from the priests hand onto their lips.

The priest was irritated and exasperated and attempted to calm things down, stressing the solemnity of the occasion and its significance particularly for the children. People shuffled back a bit but very little changed and things went ahead amid a great deal of hustle and bustle.

After the ceremony each family had a large banquet for all the *familiari* who had been able to attend together with some *parenti* and friends. Many of the guests, particularly *familiari* and close*parenti* have often had to come from far afield to attend. Frequently they were people who*si son trovati bene* (have done well for themselves). Consequently the hostess felt particularly obliged to cater to the standards she thought they would expect.

There is great pressure on certain people to attend - particularly the priest. The *festa* takes place either in the home or in a hotel/retaurant. In the latter case the banquet takes much the same form as a wedding meal with up to 500 guests being invited - although 100 was more normal.

The new communicant receives gifts from everyone who attends the meal: expensive gold jewelry, the quality of which is made explicit by the giver - cameras, pens, leather wallets and purses. These gifts are symbols of the departure from childhood and transition into adolescence. This is also emphasised in the comments to the new communicant and his/her parents. It is noticed that the child is really growing up and it will not be long before they have finished school or will be getting married or going to university.

In some cases the guests are presented with a *bomboniera*, a small box with sugared almonds and a small but often costly gift - an ashtray, a picture, an ornament perhaps embossed or engraved with some designer symbol.

Although the first communicants' friends are present, the event is largely a family and an adult affair.

2.3.2. Adolescence

The transition from childhood that was noted in the First Communion *festa* is combined with a number of other changes in the child's life. Primary school ends and the three years of *scuola media* begin. This is in many ways a transitional period. It is the time when most girls begin to go through the physical changes of puberty and although boys start later both sexes are reminded that they are becoming adults. Decisions start to be made about the future occupation of each child and study is taken more seriously. Almost all parents insist that their children go on to one of the *scuole superiori* and many take it for granted that their child will go to University.

This applies to people of a wide range of backgrounds, particularly if they themselves went to University. However, among many other families of artisan, peasant or commercial background, the desire to send their children to University is present but they recognise that this may not happen. In these cases, in addition to studying harder, children may take on an increasingly significant role in the family business. This is particularly true of shop owners. By the time they are thirteen or fourteen, their sons and daughters are well-versed in most aspects of shopkeeping apart from the more complicated financial side of things. This is then learned by specialising in *ragioneria* (accountancy) at the *Istituto Tecnico.*

Adolescents also take on a more important role in the household. Girls are now left in charge of the younger siblings and take over some of the duties of the mother in the preparation of the meals and the daily cleanliness of the house - particularly if the latter is working and there is no other relative to assist. Boys on the other hand learn to drive and to help with house repairs and decoration.

By this time most have developed a greater interest in entertainment, sociability and being with their peers. The evening *passeggiata* is a must for both sexes, particularly in the summer. They walk up and down amongst their elders and stop and chat in single sex *and* mixed groups. There is a great deal of banter and joking between single sex groups usually instigated by boys and usually consisting of insults and comments on the physical appearance of the girls. Frequently they stop and sit in the piazza and perhaps have a sly cigarette in the bushes. However due to the intense scrutiny of parents on their return home, this is more bother than it is worth for most 13-14 year olds. Boys continue to play football and also to hurl insults at their elders to try and instigate a chase or at best some entertaining dialogue.

Another favourite pastime is *facendo un giro* -going for a spin, on a moped, scooter or in some cases relatively large motorbikes. Many girls own these as well as boys. However the latter are more showy in their skills, speeding into the piazza with a flourish or driving along *Il Corso* with the bike tipped onto its back wheel for the benefit (or sometimes the derision) of passers-by.

The importance of appearance not only in such performances, but in general, becomes increasingly important as they get older. In hairstyles, clothing, musical likes and dislikes, in the possession of various goods - radios, personal stereos, jewellery, even

larger items like mopeds, scooters, motorbikes, it is important to keep up with the fashion as portrayed in magazines, on television and in the shops both locally and further afield.

There is even fashion in the kinds of television programmes watched. Young teenagers, mainly boys, were extremely voluble in walking the streets singing tunes or shouting out one-liners from the programmes in question. Extremely popular when I was in Grotta was a variety show called 'Drive-in' which consisted of dance sequences by scantily clad women on roller skates, music - sometimes famous English pop-groups, and comedy sketches, including sequences from the extremely popular 'Benny Hill Show'. Another popular programme was 'Video Box', an hour of pop videos - again mainly English or American groups - Duran Duran and Stevie Wonder being the most popular during my stay.

The access of teenagers to these various fashions, particularly with respect to clothing and goods varied according to the economic resources at their parent's disposal and the extent to which the latter regarded such things as necessary. Many factors influenced decisions here. Some had both the resources and the desire to buy such goods. These tended to be *borghesi* (i.e. townsfolk) of the elite or of families who had recently (i.e. in the last generation) become wealthy - those described by some as *'arrivistes'*. They tended to be bought new clothes frequently and these would always be of a recognisable designer make and preferably with the *marca* clearly visible: Fiorucci jeans, Benetton and Kappa jumpers, Gucci shoes, Giorgio Armani shirt and tie. All these details are closely scrutinized by friends and observed and remarked upon by others.

However, as will be seen in the next chapter, the importance of appearance and the possession of goods is not simply something developed among young people - the product of a fashion-conscious, consumer oriented sub culture. While the specific *content* of what is fashionable for young people does seem to take on its own sub-cultural impetus, appearance and possession are also closely related to and encouraged by the significance given in the community to the idea of the *bella figura* which refers to the impression made by individuals in public life. It is an idea which extends beyond physical appearance and fashion to behaviour and demeanour. Thus the teenager speeding up *il Corso* on the back wheel of his vespa is too showy about it, or falls off, or nearly runs someone over, will be said to have *"fatto una brutta figura"* "made a poor impression

For the parents of most teenagers it is just as important for them that their children should look smart, clean and *alla moda* as it is for the children themselves. Conversely to be old-fashioned, unkempt or dirty is to show signs of *arretratezza* , which

as we will see later, is most characteristic, according to townsfolk, of the *contadini* or *cafoni*.

The main celebrations or *feste* during adolescence tend to be birthday parties. The only other rite of passage, scheduled to take place at this stage in their lives is *la cresima* or confirmation. However, in most cases this takes place either at the same time as First Communion or, much to the dismay of the clergy[1], immediately prior to marriage.

As with other forms of consumption, birthday parties vary according to the resources available, the social standing of the family and the age of the child. Fifteen was a common age for giving a party. All the young guests bring gifts of records, pens, trinkets, cassette tapes, wallets etc. for their friend. However, although there is a large contingent of young people - the peers of whoever is having the birthday, it should be stressed again that such *feste* are family/adult affairs. Adult relatives, friends and neighbours, parents of all the young people present, the friends of the birthday person's siblings, other *'personaggi'*, especially the parish priest, are all invited. Once again, the individual is subordinated to the whole. Food and drink is provided for everyone. At one birthday festa I attended, the women sat inside with the young children in the *salotto* or lounge; the men sat outside on the balcony, smoking and arguing and being served with food by some of the women; and the young people danced in the garage to a disco set up by a local business.

Teenagers are still under the strict control of their parents at this stage. Sanctions are placed upon those who they meet and spend time with and siblings, relatives and neighbours are always on hand to report back on conduct. If an acquaintance is considered to be undesirable, the friendship can usually be ended without much difficulty. This is not just a matter of ordering a son or daughter to stop associating with a person and punishing them if they disobey. Rather it is a natural outcome of the kind of friendships that develop anyway: since they are a family affair, friendships cannot go far unless the adults are party to it also, through attendance at *feste*, allowing overnight stays, providing transport, arranging outings together, exchanging pleasantries etc.

In early adolescence most friendships are single-sex. The sanctions apply to both sexes but are less necessary in the case of girls who, as a result of household duties, go out less. Moreover, they ensure that little happens between the sexes. There is much talk of romance, of who is engaged to whom, but none of this is taken very seriously, or regarded as

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[1] people regard it as an inconvenient formality and not as a Sacrament

a cause for concern. Teenagers know very little about sex apart from the dirty talk that boys learn form their elders. Most parents are certainly more concerned about the possibility of their child getting caught up in the use of drugs.

The period of adolescence, from the last few years of school onwards, merges imperceptibly into the next stage when people start to get married. However, late adolescence has its own character which will be discussed first. Within the adolescent group, there is increasing diversification according to school attended, social strata, sex, tastes and interests. There is a significant change in the relationship between adolescents and their parents and elders in general. This varies according to the background and particular life-history of those involved. Nevertheless, certain patterns can be seen to emerge and these can be related to the process of integration and the relative position taken up by these different categories in relation to what they see as modernity and backwardness.

Through attending the various different *scuole superiori*, teenagers are progressively divided up into different groups and end up in the classroom with pupils form other towns, forming new friendships and breaking old ones. However, because of the nature of the different schools and the preferences of different categories of people in the town for one or another, the groups that form have a much more specific character.

The *Istituti Magistrali* for example, which provide the necessary qualification for primary teaching or entry to the *Magistero* faculty of a University (i.e. teacher-training) have an almost entriely female roll. The *Istituti Tecnici* on the other hand, have a preponderance of males. These schools are oriented towards business, commerce and industry. Accountancy (*ragioneria*) and surveying (*geometria*) are taught. Parents already involved in these areas, especially small business owners, tend to send their children to these schools. In this way, although many will have aspirations to go to University and indeed *do* go, this schooling gives them a basis for contributing to the family business or setting up on their own. The Istituti Tecnici tend to draw on the lower strata of local society.

In contrast, the *Liceo Classico e Scientifico,* a third type of school, is more academically oriented. Those who attend generally assume that they will go on to University, particularly to study Law, Medicine, Literature and Philosophy, or, on the scientific side, Engineering or Architecture. It is the families of the elite and middle-class - whether of recent or not so recent standing - who send their children to these schools.

Yet many of more humble background also attend. Parents from a peasant or artisan background who have succeeded in obtaining a professional position, tend to seek to continue the progress up the social ladder that they themselves have made. Thus a teacher in the *scuola media* whose father was a carpenter and and who graduated with a degree in literature from Naples in the 1960's, sent his son to this school and impressed upon him that he should do Law at Univeristy. The son accepted this without question.

Differentiation in late adolescence is reinforced in other contexts also, and particularly in their social life and leisure activities. With many friends coming form other towns, transport - by car or scooter - becomes more and more important.

Groups, particularly groups of males, form around particular interests and tastes. For some this is primarily a matter of support for a football team - particularly Inter Milan and Juventus[1]. For others it is a matter of musical tastes. During my stay, there was a group of devoted 'Heavy metal' fans who sat in the main *piazza* or in a car playing tapes of Iron Maiden, Saxon, Def Leppard etc. Some of their number were also fans of punk music. However, although as a friendship group, they separated themselves from others and had certain other social characteristics (low-middle stratum, sons of returned migrants), none of them adopted all of the trappings of style and behaviour associated with either of these subcultures in Britain - hairstyle, dress, objects. One youth had his hair cut 'Mohican'-style but lasted only a day before social or parental pressure forced him to shave the rest of his hair off too. Hence, as with choice in clothing, other social forces are more important in the shaping of groups than that provided by the musical genre. Nevertheless, such influences should not be overlooked and serve to indicate an orientation of the young people towards the wider 'core' arena.

Most adolescents are fans of more mainstream international pop stars - Bruce Springsteen, Duran Duran, Phil Collins, Stevie Wonder etc. This age group were little interested in Italian artists.

Much free time is spent in bars along with adult men playing billiards, cards and drinking beer. Three bars are particularly popular with young males. In two of these they play cards with the older men, thus rapidly acquiring the detailed and sophisticated skills necessary for a good player - learning signals to playing partner, slamming cards

[1] Note that these are the most famous teams in the country and are both *northern*.

dramatically down on the table, tugging the corners of one's hand to reveal only the slightest fraction of each card to identify it.

The third bar is regarded as a pizzeria/'pub' and while many people go there to eat pizza, the 'regulars' are young males, mostly in their teens who sit and drank beer and frequently get drunk. This is also the best place to procure *'hascisc'*. There was some whispering about harder drugs and these were regarded as a major problem by older people. However, I did not ever come across their use.

One of the most important pastimes however, is *"faccendo la chiazz'"* , meaning both "doing the piazza" and "checking out the talent". Some put this in rather more basic terms and boasted of their exploits. There were continual dirty jokes and stories about sexual encounters.

It is generally agreed however, that such encounters are almost always fabrications. There were continual complaints among the adolescent males that fathers kept their daughters in too much. They regarded this as old-fashioned and *incivile.* One adult listening to such complaints responded to this by saying, to a great deal of laughter:

fanno bene con delli verri come voi in giro

they do the right thing with boars like you going around

Restrictions were clearly placed more severely on adolescent girls at this stage. At the discotheque in nearby Mirabella at least 80% of the clientele were male. At the same time however, girls did not appear to be absent from the social scene. It was not unusual, nor considered untoward for a girl to go for a *passeggiata* on her own into the *piazza* although usually she would have made a prior arrangement to meet some other friends. Young couples were not upbraided for public displays of affection and were for the most part free to drive around unaccompanied. Some young women even had their own cars in which they would drive around the *piazza* and along *ll Corso* amidst the rest of the traffic.

It must be stressed though that this greater freedom of movement tended to apply to girls of relatively wealthy background. If criticised by others in the community they were quite scathing about their *mentalità arretrata* : *"Non capiscono niente; noi siamo persone più evolute"* - "They don't understand anything; we are more 'evolved' (i.e. cultured) people"; or as one girl said to me in English:

> All they think about is when will I get married. They don't worry about how do I develop my self as a person.

In the same vein, a young male explained why a female friend did not go out in the evening:

> *suo padre è vecchio, è arretrato. Non la fa salire di sera. Ha una mentalità diversa della nostra*
>
> Her father is old, backward. He doesn't let her go out in the evening. He has a different mentality from us

The girl herself was apologetic about her father's attitude but obeyed him nevertheless.

Thus it can be seen that there is a certain ambiguity surrounding the attitudes of and towards adolescents. The ideology of protection of female virtue seems to prevail, while at the same time the physical separation of the sexes is not as rigid as it has been described by other anthropologists in the paired opposites public:private::male:female. Moreover, amongst young people themsleves there is a feeling, an awareness that such separation is to be regarded as backward. They thus associate themselves with the more 'modern' values of independence and personal freedom.

Relations between adolescents and their parents and older people shed light on changing attitudes towards the family at Grotta. In his book, *Padre Padrone,* Gavino Ledda describes graphically the titanic struggle between himself and his father in the 1950's and 60's. While the latter ferociously educates him into the harsh realities of Sardinian shepherding, he himself rejects this in favour of the opportunities offered by on-going changes in national society: education, the army, emigration. The opposition between old and new is obvious, the conflict clear-cut (e.g. Ledda 1975: 214-16). In Grotta of the 1980's however, things are not quite so straightforward. The economic structure and the nature of stratification[1] in the community is extremely complex and the relation of different categories of people to 'modernity', extremely diverse.

At one extreme there are the examples of two young Grottesi males who committed suicide, and another who attempted to do so during my stay at Grotta. In all three cases, several things stood out in the local explanation of these acts. In the first place it was said that their parents did not understand them. The latter 'were peasants'

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[1] See next chapter

while the sons were *ben preparati* (well educated). Thus the problem was seen to be one of conflicting values between the different generations. Secondly, it was said that the boys were socially incompetent. In the case of the attempted suicide, the distressed mother described what happened and why:

> *Nun esce mai. Stagg' semp' rint' la casa. Io l'aggio ritt' ca è da esce a fa' l'amicizia; a piglia' 'na vagliotta. Ma ha paura ... rrice ca no sappe parla' co' le vagliotte.*
>
> He never goes out. He's always at home. I told him he has to get out, make friends; find a girlfriend. But he's afraid. He says he doesn't know how to talk to girls.

Inability to act in the public sphere in southern Italy can make someone, particularly when male, effectively a non-person. As will be made clear in the next chapter, a great deal of stress is laid upon public performance in the recognition of honour and identity. However, things are more complex than this. The mother's account implied an inability on the part of her son to act in the particular social sphere that had developed in recent years with all its demands and expectations. He felt like a peasant, he felt *rozzo* (coarse) and *arretrato,* unable to offer any of the *civile* qualities required by today's *'ragazze evolute'*. This is of course an interpretation. However, if it is correct and the circumstances behind these acts *were* to do with the conflict of values and the inability to act in a modern social sphere, then the response, to commit or try to commit suicide, is a profoundly modern one also.

Complete rejection of the world is one rather extreme reaction to their situation of people among this age-group. Less extreme, but nevertheless significant, are those who reject the values of the older generation by anti-social behaviour: those who get drunk and use drugs, who break windows, spray grafitti on walls and steal cars, get into fights etc. I tended to be sheltered by those who knew me from the *ragazzi cattivi* ('bad boys') who engaged in this kind of activity. From the contact I did have however, it was evident that they were scornful of their elders and had little regard for what other people thought of them. Notably a high proportion were the sons of emigrants and had been brought up in working class areas of England or North America.

The reaction of older people was of course to condemn their actions. For some they were simply *ragazzi cattivi;* often it was said that they came from bad families. Others however, regarded their actions as typical of 'today's' adolescents in general, thus setting things in terms of intergenerational conflict. One man (65) contrasted them with his own boyhood during Mussolini's time. His views were not uncommon:

Malgrado il tempo Michele, perchè erano tempi brutti, c'era poco da mangiare, c'era la miseria, c'era la povertà ... malgrado il tempo, c'era almeno l'educazione, c'era il rispetto per gli anziani, per il padre, per i professori - e per questo c'era anche la dignità. *Io dovevo lavorare per mio padre, dovevo fare tutto quello che diceva lui, altrimenti mi picchiava. La vita è quello che è: si deve fare sacrifici, si deve lavorare ... Ma adesso c'è la droga e anche quando i genitori stanno bene. Le ragazze stanno in mezz' alla strada fino a mezzanotte come prostitute. I giovanotti sono disgraziati, delinquenti - chiedi ad uno di prenderti un pacchetto di sigarette e ti manda a fare in culo! C'hanno tutto. Tutti vogliono la motocicleta e tutti la pigliano - questo è il problema*

In spite of these times Michael, because they were terrible times, there was little to eat, there was misery and poverty ... In spite of the times, at least there were manners, there was respect for elders, for the father, for teachers - and because of this there was *dignity.* I had to work for my father, I had to do everything he said, otherwise he'd belt me. Life is what it is: you have to make sacrifices, you have to work ... But now there are drugs and even when the parents are well-off. Girls are out on the streets at midnight, like prostitutes. The young lads are *disgraziati,* delinquents - ask one of them to get you a packet of fags and he tells you to fuck off! They've got everything. They all want motorbikes and they all get them - this is the problem.

However, the majority of adolescents in Grotta should not be portrayed in this way. Rather, they fall into one of two categories. On the one hand there are those who associate themselves with the kind of actions just described but who do more talking about rebellion than actually putting it into practice. On the other hand there are those who for one reason or another seem quite content with the way things are and do not run into conflict with parents or other older people.

The first group continually complain about the lack of things to do *per i giovani* (for the young). They refer to the second group as *ragazzi tradizionali* (traditional young people):

Loro stanno tranquillo. Mangiano, lavorano, dormono e basta. Però noi siamo diversi, siamo un po' ribelli ... vogliamo divertirci ogni tanto

They're quite happy. They eat work and sleep and that's enough. But we're different, we're a little rebellious ... we want to enjoy ourselves now and then.

They relate the lack of things to do directly to the lack of 'progress' of the town and the backward mentality of the people, particularly older people.

C'è molto povertà in questo paese. Però, non è povertà materiale - la gente sta bene. `E povertà di civiltà, non c'è il progresso, la gente è troppo legata alla famiglia

There's lots of poverty in this town, but its not material poverty - people are well-off. Its cultural poverty, there's no progress. People are too tied to the family.

There was a sense then, that greater freedom from traditional relationships was required. there was envy for those who had managed to get out of Grotta and were working in Rome or in the North. Many spoke of emigrating and some did so while I was there- to America in one case, and in another to South Africa. Most however, satisfied their restlessness by going on holiday to Greece in the summer in groups or perhaps going to a Bruce Springsteen concert in Milan.

In practice there was no major conflict of interests or expectations between them and their parents. The latter recognised that there was little for them to do and agreed with their assessment of the town. Many parents were people who had already been through the major upheaval of the 1960's. They may have experienced the kind of struggle described by Gavino Ledda in Sardinia, but by the 1980's the battle for 'modernity' had been more or less won. Some parents describe with evident horror the restrictions placed upon them by their own parents and say they would not do the same to their own children.

The *ragazzi tradizionali* make little protest about their situation. They accept the decisions and the authority of their parents. This does not mean that they are less familiar with 'modernity' as it presents itself to them. They too seek to emigrate. However, their reasons for doing so are articulated in terms of the modern material benefits that this would bring rather than the personal freedom it might offer.

2.3.3. Marriage

Courtship

At some stage in late adolescence, relationships between the sexes begin to get more serious. Couples begin to court. As far as the young people are concerned, their relationship is between them as individuals. Courtship is carried on in the idiom of romantic love which is of course encouraged by the media in films, adverts, soap operas, magazines. And in conversation with young people, love came out on top as the most important ingredient of marriage for both sexes. Other factors were mentioned like

compatibility, similarity of likes and dislikes, getting on well together. One young man of 21 put it this way:

> *Io aspetto la ragazza giusta, deve essere bella, la devo amare, dobbiamo andare d'accordo e così via*
>
> I am waiting for the 'right girl'; she must be beautiful, I must be in love with her, we must get on well and so on

Little mention was made of social or economic position. And although parents and older people were more explicit about the importance of the latter elements, nevertheless, it would be a mistake to suggest that marriage matches were an economic arrangement wholly controlled by the families involved. Any mention of the economics of the union is generally greeted with accusations of *arretratezza*.

In practice things are somewhat different. We have already seen that friendships can be terminated if they are considered undesirable by the parents. When it comes to courting couples things become slightly stormier if the parents disapprove. Once again however, they can put the brakes on by not taking part in the normal relationships that develop between families in such situations and by refusing to consent to the marriage. The strength of this sanction is confirmed by the continued (though infrequent) occurrence of *la fujita* ('flight'), when a young couple bent on marriage run off together overnight thus forcing the parents' consent with a *fatto compiuto* (fait accompli).

It is in this kind of situation that the reasons for opposition to a match emerge. The unsuitability of a spouse as far as the family are concerned *does* relate clearly to their economic and social position. In one case, a family's opposition to their daughter's choice of marriage partner (thus sparking off *la fujita*), was based on rumours that the husband's mother had run off with another man. This kind of scandal was regarded as damaging to the reputation of the daughter's family if they were in any way associated with it.

In fact it is only rarely that sanctions have to be enforced or that they are broken by such drastic action as *la fujita*. Rather the 'elective affinities' of most couples tend to match them in accordance with their existing social position. This is not simply a matter of strict class endogamy since as already discussed there is a great deal of social mobility. Hence, with an education, a good job, the right contacts and the adoption of a certain style, a person can marry into a higher social stratum than that of his/her parents.

The important shift is from emphasis on the extent of family patrimony to skills, qualities and attributes which are acquired by *individuals*. Relationships develop where

people move in the same circles, have a similar education, acquire similar tastes, manner of speaking, expectations. In these situations, people have a sense of their limits. Thus a painter and his son joked about marrying the latter off to the daughter of an extremely wealthy *commerciante* from Benevento who had a business in the town and for whom the father had done some work. The *basis* of the joke was the gulf that existed between the families in terms of wealth which made any serious consideration of marriage almost unthinkable

In relationships that *are* considered appropriate both families will be involved from an early stage and good relations between them will be fostered. Any occasion at which they can be brought together will be seized upon - a birthday of *any* member of one family, for example, and the other will be invited. The following paragraphs describe a birthday party at which the official engagement of the 'birthday girl' was announced. Her *fidanzato* (fiancé) was of course there with all his close *familiari* and some cousins. In addition came the priest, anthropologist and a few family friends - about forty guests in all.

Each guest brought a gift for the young girl. These were received by her *fidanzato* as she was in her bedroom being made up and having her hair done by her sisters and future *cognate* (sisters-in-law)[1]. Just before the meal she emerged coyly from the room with her hair puffed out around her tiny face 'Dallas-style' and her face heavily covered in make-up. She was greeted with exuberant comments on her beauty.

The party consisted of a lavish meal that began at midday and went on for at least five hours. The older women served and occasionally took a bite to eat in between courses and 'on the hoof'. Several people had cameras and demanded various combinations of relationships for photographs: the couple alone; with her parents; with his parents; all the parents together; the mothers on their own (loud cheers) etc.

Towards the end, *la torta* - the birthday cake - was brought out after at least eight courses. Sparkling wine was served and then the girl's father stood up and announced the engagement to uproarious applause and loud chants for a *"ba-cio! ba-cio!"*(kiss! kiss!) from the couple. He then raised his hand to indicate that he wanted to speak. The priest turned to me and whispered that we were about to get a poem. The father was known to be good with words. On this occasion there was no poetry but a speech

[1]who begin to be called *cognate* immediately after engagement

about the forthcoming marriage, what such a step meant for the couple, his contentment at the prospect, his best wishes. Whatever happens, he said:

> *i genitori sono sempre i genitori - anche dopo il matrimonio. Noi vogliamo dare ai nostri figli il migliore. Gli vogliamo dare una buona spinta nella vita ... Però, voi* [turns to couple], *voi dovete acchiappare tutto quello che la vita vi offre. Saremo sempre qui e vi aiuteremo sempre, ma adesso tocca a voi ...*
>
> Parents are always parents - even after marriage. We want to give our children the best. We want to give them a good start in life. But you *[turns to couple]* you must seize everything that life offers. We will always be there and we will always help you, but now its up to you ...

Again there was uproarious applause and then the *fidanzato* stood up and gave a short speech thanking his mother and father for 'everything' and *"i miei suoceri"* - "my mother- and father-in-law" for accepting him into their family. Everyone then demanded that the *fidanzata* say something but she was overcome with emotion and could only burble through her tears *"grazie a tutti"* -thanks to everyone.

In a 'return' party, this time to celebrate the killing of the pig at the *fidanzato's* home in the *campagna*, the guests were almost identical although this time there were more cousins and friends from his side of the family. The practical acceptance of the *fidanzati* into each other's families long before the marriage itself, was manifested this time not in any formal pronouncements but in the way in which the girl joined with her *suocera* (mother-in-law) and *cognate* in the preparation and serving of the meal and in the clearing up. She became host and not guest.

Engagements are formalised in other ways. The girl generally receives a gold ring, a smaller version of the wedding ring. Not a great deal of emphasis is placed upon this particular symbol however. An engagement may last as long as ten years, particularly where the couple are young when they first start courting. Most last for a year or two and most marriages take place when the couple are in their mid-twenties.

Attitudes to extra-marital sex varied considerably, but particularly according to age. It was generally conceded that the 'young of today' had a different approach towards sexual relations and this was more or less countenanced depending upon the context and the background of those involved. It also depended on the likelihood of the relationship lasting. Some people did cohabit. Frequently however, these were young people who had emigrated to northern Italy. In one case, a couple lived in Como but returned to Grotta each summer. They were self-declared communists and said that they

thought little of the institution of marriage. At the same time their relationship was extremely stable. It bore all the hallmarks of other matches in terms of the family relationships involved and in fact, in the end, the couple agreed to get married to please their parents and put an end to *pettegolezzi* (gossip). They themselves saw nothing wrong with their relationship and got very angry when the priest tried to make things awkward for them. *"La mia coscienza è chiara"* - "my conscience is clear" - said the young man.

In opposition to this case is the example of an older man describing a friend and the imminent marriage of the latter's daughter:

> *ha fatto tanti sacrifici, tantissimi, per far crescere le figlie e a costruirse la casa. Prima avevano niente, erano poveri ... e adesso ha il grande onore di vedere sua figlia sposarsi in chiesa con il velo. Ed è un grande, grande onore, perchè non tutti fanno così oggi, non tutti ...*
>
> He has made many sacrifices, very many, to raise his daughters and build himself a house. Before they had nothing, they were poor ... and now he has the great honour of seeing his daughter married in church with the veil. And its a great, great honour, because not everyone does this today, not everyone ...

Respect then is given by this speaker for the more 'traditional' way of doing things, while the 'modern' way is quietly disparaged. At the same time, a woman in her late fifties who would perhaps have been expected to hold similar views, responded to a television news article about increasing extra-marital relationships in the following way:

> *Secondo me l'amore dei giovani è più giusto. Stanno insieme fin quando non si amano più e poi si lasciano.*
>
> In my opinion, young people's [approach to] love is better. They stay together until they don't love each other any more and then they leave each other.

"Ma fino ad un certo punto! " - "Up to a point!", came the rather distressed reply of a younger woman listening to the conversation.

In less stable or less established relationships, those who have or are thought to have had sexual relations are not leniently treated - particularly the women. Their chances of getting married can be ruined by not remaining *casta e pura* (chaste and pure). This is already evidenced in the idea of *la fujita* - the public declaration of consummation of a relationship *demands* marriage. At the same time, many people ridicule and criticise these attitudes. A young man described to me as something of a tragedy that a female friend of his, now over thirty, had not been able to get married *"solo per qualche piccola indiscrezione"* (just because of some small indiscretion) when she was younger. Once again

the phrase *"è gente arretrata"* was his assessment of his fellow townsfolk who imposed such sanctions. In another case, a girl's own mother declared to her mother-in-law that 'Maria would of course be hanging out the sheet of the bridal bed the next day to prove her pre-marital virginity'. This in fact shocked the mother-in-law who declared:

Nun m'interessan' 'ste cose - basta ca stann' cuntenti

I'm not interested in such things - I just want them to be happy

The majority of people were quick to condemn such *vecchi costumi* (old customs). They were considered to be things that only went on in Sicily where the people were still *arretrati* and *incivili.*

Scorn is poured upon other usages said to occur only in Sicily or certain parts of Basilicata. These were frequently recounted to me for my amusement and it was assumed that I would be equally amazed at the brutal and uncivilised practices of these regions. One was an elaborate form of husband-capture whereby a young man was lured into the house of parents who wanted him to marry their daughter. As soon as they could, they locked him in with the latter and themselves went out. This was considered sufficent grounds to implicate the unwilling suitor, the assumption being that two people of the opposite sex, left alone together, cannot but have sexual relations Another was the case of certain parts of Potenza where it was said there was no wedding feast until the following day and it had been ensured that the marriage had been consummated correctly.

In these statements we see once again that people seem to judge their own and other's actions on the basis of the opposition between *arretratezza* and *civiltà.* It could be argued that these responses are ones made to the leading questions of an anthropologist and what people actually do in practice is quite different. I would suggest that such responses are in fact part of their everyday practice. People are constantly responding, whether consciously or not, to the images and representations of the core in precisely the same manner as they responded to me as an anthropologist. In doing so they are establishing their social position and identity in an arena much wider than the local one. Increasingly, the core sets the standards and in order to maintain their position or attain a better one, people have not only to adopt apposite economic and political strategies, but also to adopt the concomitant attitudes and lifestyle. This includes having a 'modern' attitude to the family.

The images of Sicilian marriage practices that people provided me with may well be true. Indeed they may be true of Grotta also. But the fact that such images become

part of the mythology of the core, part of a classification through which societies are categorised as 'backward' or 'modern', or somewhere in between, is quite another matter. By classifying these practices as backward, the core has in its hands a very powerful tool for their eradication. Things do not stop there however. As well as engaging in the denigration of the periphery, the core also promotes itself.

This is manifestoed in, for example, advertising of contraceptives. These seem to take two principal forms. On the one hand are those directed at sensible family planning, portraying, for example, mothers liberated from the burden of too many children, returning to a career, looking beautiful at forty etc. On the other hand there are those which promote loving relationships between young people. Romantic love is presented as the necessary and indeed sufficient ingredient for such relationships. Such views are presented to the viewing public as legitimate. The question of their moral acceptability is put to one side. People can of course decide for themselves whether to accept them or not - but they are not asked whether they want to or not.

In Grotta today, the use of contraception is no new phenomenon. It is expressed by the phrase *stare attento* (to be careful, i.e. coitus interruptus). However, contraceptives are another matter and although I cannot comment on their use, they are not publicly countenanced. Young men talked of obtaining them by going to towns where people would not recognise them. At the same time, their widespread availability means that it can no longer be taken for granted that they will not be used.

Preparation for Marriage

When a couple decide to go ahead with marriage, they must, in accordance with new laws introduced by the Church in the 1970's, inform their parish priest at least six months in advance and have some spiritual preparation directed by the priest. In most cases couples are reluctant to participate in this process or know nothing about it until it is too late. This frequently causes friction with the priest who can refuse to process the necessary documents, or even refuse to perform the ceremony. The situation is sometimes exacerbated by the local tendency to leave confirmation until the last minute - i.e. immediately prior to marriage - a tendency also condemned by the priest (see above).

Some couples do attend the preparation sessions where all the implications of marriage are discussed. In one session methods of contraception acceptable to the Church were discussed. The couples were also spoken to by a gynaecologist. Two women spoke afterwards of delaying pregnancy either from fear or insecurity given their unstable economic situation. However, in both cases they became pregnant almost immediately

after marriage. It is nevertheless significant that they would consider delaying having children, something that in the past was anathema.

In the days leading up to the wedding, relatives and friends come to the house of the bride-to-be's parents bringing gifts. At this stage the bride is at home all the time with her mother to receive the visitors, even if she normally works, and even if her work is in Rome or the North. In the meantime, the groom-to-be spends more time in the company of friends - going to the bar in the evening, playing cards, going for a pizza. He would be the major topic of conversation. The emphasis was not, however, on an end to his personal freedom, but on the real start to his sex life and constant jokes were made about this.

Back at the bride's house, drinks, *amaretti* and *confetti* (almond biscuits and sweets) are laid out each day ready to offer to the visitors. Presents are laid out on display and each person is informed of who has given what. Gifts vary according to who is doing the giving, their relationship to the couple and of course the means at their disposal. Washing machines, fridges, dishwashers, televisions, were not uncommon gifts together with other smaller *elettrodomestici* (household electrical appliances). Others commonly gave ornamental goods - crystal vases, china etc. In some cases advantage would be taken of the fact that large stores in Avellino and Naples took *liste di nozze* - wedding lists.

However, a great many, perhaps the majority simply gave money and it was generally accepted that the amount given should at least cover the price of the person's wedding meal. For many this was then, a very expensive business especially if they had several weddings to go to in a short space of time - not to mention the cost of being suitably dressed.

The arrival of the visitors to the house was to a large extent prompted by the sending out of invitations. This was an extremely delicate business since it was important not to give offence to anyone by not inviting them or appearing to forget them[1]. Previous invitations were carefully reciprocated. In one case a couple were baffled when they had no reply to their invitations except from those who had been directly informed by word of mouth. They made discrete inquiries and discovered that none of the invitations had arrived and that several people were *already* offended, the wedding being only days

[1] It was also an opportunity to *give* offence where it was thought that this was merited, by deliberately not inviting someone

away. When I suggested that they should simply send out new invitations or phone people up, I discovered that things were far more complicated. To do so could make it seem like they were looking for presents from those who, in some cases would no longer have enough time to arrange holidays to attend the wedding: *"Si fa una brutta figura"* - "We would make a bad impression". Complicating matters was the arrival with gifts of visitors who had not been invited. The couple had to decide whether or not the people were looking for an invitation, whether the present merited one whether they were looking for it or not, or whether they *wanted* to invite them or not.

The delicacy of invitation is matched by the care with which invitees decide whether or not to accept. This is particularly true of close relatives upon whom there is a strong obligation to attend and also to make a substantial gift. Frequently this can be made awkward by past arguments and disputes. One girl said about the imminent wedding of her first cousin:

> *Non ci vado e non gli faccio un regalo! Lui non è venuto al matrimonio mio e non m'ha regalato niente*
>
> I'm not going and I'm not giving him a present. He didn't come to my wedding and he didn't give me anything

She then went on to curse his sisters and criticise the way they dressed and stayed out late *come puttane* (like whores).

This is also a period when the parents of the bride and groom make their specific contributions to the match and the final touches are put to their new home - whether this be a room in the house of one set of parents, an apartment attached to the latter's home or that of a sibling, or a completely separate unit. Traditionally it is the duty of the bride's parents to provide the furniture for the new home, or at least for the couple's bedroom, together with *i panni* or *corredo* - the dowry of embroidered linen. The wedding meal would be paid for equally by each family while the groom's family would be responsible for providing the new home. In addition each set of parents would give their son or daughter an amount of land or a sum of money.

At Grotta at least, such precise traditions are not adhered to. As one woman put it:

> *Chiaramente i contadini tengono di più alle formalità e alla tradizione, mentre invece i borghesi e i professionisti agiscono su un piano paritetico*
>
> Clearly the peasants hold on to these formalities and traditions more, while instead the townsfolk and professionals act on an equal basis

In most cases there is an attempt to see who can provide the most which usually ends up roughly equal. Some of the changes in tradition can be easily related to the process of integration since the 1960's. For example, many couples from poor backgrounds but who have received an education and obtained *posti*, are in a far better position than their parents to provide their own wedding and many do so.

To be able to build a home which has accommodation for one or more child and the latter's family is the ideal of most parents. There is no rule of precedence for sons or daughters. Rather it depends on who is in need first and what alternatives are being provided by the child's spouse's family. However, where one family provides the house, the other will provide the furniture and/or the meal. *"I panni"* continue to be provided by the bride but in most cases the linen is no longer hand-embroidered but bought ready made from retailers. It is extremely costly and most is never used. There were cases of people who continued to prepare a *corredo* by hand but these would be supplementary to the main items bought. In some cases mothers even prepared a corredo for their sons.

Finally, *nuora* and *suocera* (daughter- and mother-in-law) would often exchange an individual gift of gold jewellery - usually a necklace or bracelet.

Wedding Ceremonies

Approximately one month before the wedding (i.e. the Church ceremony and meal) each couple is required to carry out a *promessa di sposa* (marriage vow) at the Town Hall. This is the civil ceremony in which official marriage certificates are signed before the *sindaco*. The couple promise to be good to each other for the rest of their marriage. Legally speaking they are from this point onwards married. Needless to say however, few accept this as sufficient or even significant and the Church openly condemns the practice. The couple remain in their respective households until after the public religious ceremony. At the same time, the *promessa* is seized as another opportunity to celebrate. A meal is prepared for close family and friends and gifts are given.

Most weddings take place in the summer months when relatives and friends have returned from abroad or North Italy and people are more available generally to attend. The ceremony is almost always on a Sunday - again for practical reasons, but this also means that people are out on the streets - the whole town can watch at least some of the proceedings.

In what follows I will compare two weddings that I attended to build up a picture of the nature of the ceremony in contemporary Grotta.

On the morning of the wedding the close relatives and friends of the bride gathered at her parents' house, and while the finishing touches were made to her dress, hair and make-up and photographs taken, the guests were offered an aperitif and *amaretti* and *confetti*. Everyone offered *auguri* (best wishes) to the parents, and the mother cried. When the bride emerged, people gradually formed a *corteo* (procession) behind her and her father and filed down the hill, along the main street and into the church. Some cousins behind me mumbled about the order of precedence and the fact that they should be ahead of those who were merely friends; people opened their doors and windows and came out into the street to watch. Some threw *confetti*, small coins and rice. comments were made about the beauty of the bride and the details of her appearance.

The couple pointed out later that few people bothered with the *corteo* anymore - particularly since the bride's house could be a long way from the church. However, they decided that they liked the idea and wanted to be more traditional.

This is interesting when compared with another wedding of two Grottesi which took place in a small village further into the *aree interne* of the province. It was considered to be a more backward place. The bride's father, who died when his five children were still young came from this village and hence the wedding was held there with the bride's paternal grandfather giving her away. Here again there was a *corteo* from house to church. In this instance however, this was carried out for the benefit of the local people and the bride's sister was at pains to get all the guests to participate.

Ci tengono molto a questa usanza. E` un paese molto tradizionale ... dobbiamo rispettare le loro tradizioni ... Si fa pure a Grotta qualche volta però non ci teniamo nello stesso modo.

This custom is very important to them. Its a very traditional village ... we must respect their traditions ... Sometimes we do it at Grotta too but we don't hold to it in the same way.

It was implied then, that for the people in the village the marriage was incomplete without a *sfilata* (corteo). One of the guests was delighted with this idea and with the whole idea of the village being steeped in tradition. On arrival in the town he went into ecstasies about the beauty and quaintness of the village, and listened with obvious pleasure to the bride's sister's stories about her early childhood in the village - getting water from the public fountain, the only method of transport being *il mulo* (mule). In thus sentimentalising the village and in consciously recreating a particular tradition (*il corteo*) they acted as people *distanced* from such tradition.

In neither case then was the *corteo* carried on outside of its definition as traditional and in both cases, I would suggest, its enactment merely increased their distance from such tradition.

Let us return to the first wedding. When the *corteo* arrived at the church it was met at the door by the groom and the priest. The former took the bride's arm and the priest led them into the church with everyone crowding in behind them. The local photographer took pictures of the ceremony, but for the first and only time in any such ceremony I observed, there was no video camera. This was partly due to expense - although most people usually knew someone who owned one. But it was also partly due to the fact that the couple, particularly the bride, did not like the idea. She had been brought up in Leeds, and although she was now well-integrated into local society, she thought that 'Italians' made too much fuss over such things. In addition, being a devout Catholic, she had chosen a significant feast day as her wedding day - the *Festa dell'Immacolata*. She thought that cameras on the altar would be incongruous with the spirit of the ceremony.

Again, if we turn to the other wedding we will see a contrast. The groom once again met the bride at the door, but this time as everyone crowded in and took their places, six smartly dressed men descended on the altar. One was the professional photographer; two were close relatives of bride and groom and each carried a video camera. The other three were the individual assistants of each 'cameraman'. They helped to set up extra spotlighting, tripods and hold wires and flashguns as the film-

makers moved about the altar capturing the various important moments of the service; the vows, the exchange of rings, receiving communion and the final *corteo* out of the church again. Throughout, the priest paid little attention to the chaos that was going on around him. It was evident that this situation and not that of the first wedding was the current 'norm'. Making videos at weddings is something that people do unself-consciously - although it cannot be something that has been going on for very long. Their familiarity with the presence of cameras seems to me to be a clear indication of an orientation towards 'modernity'.

Returning again to the first wedding: once out of the church, everyone got quickly into their cars. There were no special limousines for the bride and groom or any other close relatives although the car in which they were driven had a ribbon tied to the bonnet. Then came the *sfilata* that everyone really enjoyed - the motorcade through the town to the hotel, making as much noise as possible with car horns on the way.

All wedding meals tend to take place in hotels although some families do provide the food or animals to be slaughtered. In the hotel the main *sala* was filled with tables laid with water, red and white wine, more *confetti* and the first course of *antipasto*. Once the newly weds had arrived, people simply sat down and began the serious business of eating and drinking, thus beginning the most important display of all. The number of guests invited varied from 100 to 5- or 600. On this occasion there were around 250 present. The meal was extremely lavish with at least nine or ten courses. There were however, large gaps in between as people got up to wander around and talk to friends at different tables or go outside for a stroll. The parents of the couple wandered around checking that everyone was happy and invariably eliciting praise for the magnificent spread provided. There were no speeches - just lots of talking and occasionally shouts, comments and jokes towards the table at which the couple were sitting. The favourite shout was simply: *"Per gli sposi!"* - "for the bride and groom", at which everyone would clap, cheer and bang their glasses on the table.

As the meal wore on the couple got up and went round each table taking a photograph with each group of guests. This would subsequently be sent to them. When the very last course had been eaten, some people went home while others cleared aside the tables and began dancing to music provided by an accordionist who had in fact been playing throughout the meal. On leaving, each female guest was presented by the bride with a *bomboniera* as they said goodbye and left. This was a box with more *confetti* inside and a small gift.

Both the meal and the *bomboniere* are important indicators to people of the quality of the wedding. They are commented upon by guests and those who have not been ask about them. As a result the hosts put a great deal of care and anxiety and expense into getting items which are acceptable. Again department stores in Naples and Avellino specialise in these items and are frequently used by people in Grotta.

The aftermath to the wedding is the *viaggio di nozze* (wedding trip) or as some people call it the *luna di miele* (literally 'honey moon'). This is a relatively new development. In the past only a minority of people, i.e. those of the elite, were able to afford a holiday. Today almost everyone goes away at least for a few days after they are married, usually to another part of Italy or in some cases abroad. This becomes another way in which parents validate their *sacrifici* and establish their status.

An increasingly popular location for the *luna di miele* was the Canary Islands. One couple who had decided to go there told me of others who had been, and described the benefits and attractions: the travel agents provided a package deal with everything included - flight, hotel, meals, entertainment, trips; it was near Africa so that it would be very hot; nearly everyone that goes are *freschi sposi* (newly-weds) so that they would be able to make friends and go out together; there were entertainments arranged each evening - discos, films etc. and so they would not be by themselves all the time - they would have other people to talk to and so would not get on each others nerves. The couple's familiarity with the trappings of modernity is apparent. They are participating in a culture which goes far beyond the merely local.

For both parents and newly-weds this whole process is a high point in the life-cycle. For the former it is a culmination of everything they have worked for, the visible manifestation of their achievements. For the latter it is a rite of passage into the full status of adulthood and the assumption of the responsibilities that go with it. It is up to them to begin the whole process again.

In much of the above I have emphasised the social aspect of the event which seems to predominate and I think that from what has been said a local emphasis on display is apparent. This is no different from what other anthropologists have said of such occasions in their '60's fieldwork. However there is a difference and the influence of what we have described as the forces of integration is apparent. The influence of the market is apparent in the type of gifts given, in the *bombonieri* and in the use of videos. In addition to all these features however we also have the attributes of the participants

emerging and it seems to me that throughout, the standard to which people are aspiring , against which they judge each other is not by any means a local one. Their sense of place , of what is appropriate in these circumstances is one which goes beyond the confines of a purely local belief system and enters the national arena.

2.3.4. Adulthood

The transition that the ceremony of marriage ritually effects is not as clear cut as it might appear. Two things in particular validate adult status and responsibility for these falls on both partners, if unequally. The first is to have children and become good parents. Secondly, the couple must be able to provide for their family. Traditionally women looked after husband and children while he provided for them. Today many women are also providers and in many cases may be the principal earners.

As mentioned above, most women seemed to get pregnant in the first few months after marriage. Hence despite talk of contraception among some young people, it was not, in practice, a consideration, at least at this stage. Nevertheless I did witness an old woman of 85 counsel a young couple to "be careful". Always stop before the climax she said, quite straightforwardly: *"non fa niente, è buono lo stesso"* - "it doesn't matter, it's just as good". She had had nineteen pregnancies and thirteen surviving children yet stood faithfully by the method, saying that only when they had forgotten to *stare attento* had she become pregnant.

For those couples who do not have children immediately there is a great deal of anxiety and stigma for both partners. Some people who considered themselves to be more civilised and modern ridiculed such emphasis on having children immediately. However, the majority of people regarded it as something to worry about or offer sympathy for. Generally it was a matter of concern for the whole family and not just for the couple themselves.

One girl who had carried out *la fujita* with her husband when they were both seventeen had still not had a child by the age of twenty-three. She went to local doctors and to specialists in Avellino who put her on various drugs and hormonal treatments. On each occasion her mother accompanied them to the doctors and once they even insisted on my presence when they went to get the results of some tests. The doctor declared that there was nothing wrong with either of them and that they should resolve the matter in bed. At this the mother created a huge fuss, insisted that her daughter was defective in some way and demanded to have her referred to other specialists in Rome or even in Milan if necessary. The importance attached to this stage can therefore be seen quite readily.

There are many other practical ways in which women in this position may suffer. On marriage they may lose the circle of friends with whom they were brought up and went to school. At the same time they cannot join the company of young mothers and pregnant women. This was particularly true of the girl in the above example since she was unusually young when she got married. Although she and her husband had their own fully furnished apartment, this was barely lived in with most time being spent at the girl's parents' house for all meals and social occasions. Her mother continued to regard her as her daughter and discipline her when necessary saying: *"E` ancora una ragazza"* - "She's still just a girl".

The insecurity and uncertainty of this period is often compounded by economic instability. Many couples are simply not in a position to fend for themselves financially. Although each individual and family does as much as they can to make their position more secure prior to marriage, success in this endeavour is by no means guaranteed. This is especially so if the couple start a family immediately.

With the birth of children a new round of *sacrifici* begins. For many this means not simply working hard to provide for a family, but also giving up plans for a career. A common complaint among young mothers was that prior to marriage they had been going to University or attending other courses. On having children they had to renounce any desire to carry out their earlier aspirations. Many ended up doing jobs that they did not like or that they did not find fulfilling. An employee at the town hall said:

> *Io volevo fare l'infermiere o magari l'assistente sociale però poi mi sono sposata e è nato mio figlio e adesso sto qui ... Non mi piace tanto però sono sacrifici che si deve fare, devo pensare ai figli*
>
> I wanted to be a nurse or perhaps a social worker but then I got married and my son was born and now I'm here ... I don't like it much but these are sacrifices you have to make, I have to think of the children.

Another woman had started a course in Industrial Chemistry at the University of Padua but again had had to give it up when she married and started a family. She complained that she was overqualified for the job she was doing (again a clerk at the Town Hall) and hated being there:

Si! Tengo un lavoro, ma per me è un grosso guaio, proprio perchè devo fare cose per cui sono troppo qualificata

Yes I've got a job, but for me it's a great misfortune because I have to do things for which I'm overqualified.

It was interesting that although most of these women ultimately accepted the duty of making sacrifices for one's children, many also tended to view their lives in terms of personal fulfilment:

Qui non possiamo vivere le nostre possibilità.

Here we cannot live out our full potential.

Again this was blamed upon the backwardness of the town and its lack of and distance from facilities and important centres.

Although a degree is a powerful weapon in the economic and cultural arena[1] many men also recognise that the practical exigencies of earning a living require them to give up their studies and pursue whatever economic possibilities there are in Grotta in order to feed their family. Thus a student in the Faculty of Economics and Commerce at Naples University chose not to finish his degree when he got married but rather to set up his own *Torroneficio* (manufacturer of a local type of sweet). He had worked in this business with his uncle for many years and so this was the safest strategy although in the long run less lucrative and prestigious.

In carrying out the task of raising a family the roles of husband and wife, men and women are relatively distinct (although as we have seen women increasingly have become breadwinners). This distinction is epitomised in the oppositions between *piazza* and *casa*, outside and inside, public and private.

The domain of women is the home where they prepare meals, do the housework and entertain friends. There are a small number of people who object to this scheme of things particularly since many women now work in full-time posts as teachers, clerks, officials etc. There was even one couple who split the household chores evenly in accordance with their left-wing political convictions. It may also be a less rigid distinction in the future, given what has been said about the views of many adolescents. However, that remains to be seen.

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[1] See Ryan (in Press) for a full account of the University in South Italy

A great variety of tasks devolve on the women in the everyday upkeep of the home. However, these private tasks are not only judged by the family but also in public in the appearance of the home to visitors and in the appearance of husband and children to the outside world.

"La pulizia è la prima cosa!" - "Cleanliness comes first!" is a slogan frequently proclaimed by houseproud women. Thus after every midday meal - the main meal of the day - the house is turned upside down - floors swept and washed, dishes done and everything put in its place. This work is carefully monitored by neighbours and friends and sometimes quite explicitly inspected. One important event during Lent is when the priest visits houses saying the rosary to a cohort of women. On one of these occasions I witnessed women come into a house which had been minutely cleaned, and shift furniture around and look in corners for any signs of dirt and then comment favourably on how well the job had been done. It would have been interesting to see their reaction had the job not been done to their satisfaction. The relative merits of the myriad cleaning fluids and powders, type of cloth, mop and brush available in the shops was a common topic of conversation among groups of women.

Keeping clothes clean, neat and in shape is also of great importance and great attention is paid to the quality of material when buying clothes (although for some people there are limits to the extent to which they can be fussy about the latter). Once again it is essential to present a *bella figura* in public and thus what people wear and the state of their dress is very important. Again women are responsible for this task and are always present when items are bought.

La bella figura also depends upon how a women feeds her family. This involves not only the daily routine of shopping, preparation, cooking and serving, but also the annual tasks of preparing preserves, making salamis, drying various fruits and vegetables (notably chilli peppers). Men are involved only in the making of wine, cheese and hams. Such tasks are more extensive in the *campagna.* However, even in the town, most families prepare a wide range of products for use all year round.

Women's entertainment in adulthood is largely confined to the home or to the homes of neighbours, friends and relatives. They sit in groups knitting, sewing and embroidering and talking about what various people have done and said or indeed, what has happened in the news. On Sundays they will go for a *passeggiata* along *il Corso,* usually with children in tow and sometimes with their husband. In the summer they are

seen more frequently in public in the evening catching the cooler air after the *afa* (sultriness, stuffiness) of the day. Apart from those occasions and apart from the few women, usually communists who, to an extent, reject these boundaries, *il Corso* and the main *piazza* together with the bars that line them are largely a male domain. An adult woman only enters a bar to buy something and leave.

Lastly, women, as in most Catholic countries are the custodians of the Faith. Many do not bother with the Church other than at Easter, Christmas and the life-cycle rituals. However, if anyone in the family goes it is likely to be a woman. At daily Mass there is never more than a handful of men in the congregation while on Sundays, proportionally the same. Some men hang around outside smoking and talking. Very few young people go other than a group of adolescents whose mothers are very active in organising Church events, processions etc. These young people have little choice in the matter.

As regards men, when they are not working, eating or sleeping, most spend a large amount of time in the *piazza*, walking along *il Corso*, in bars. They talk politics, make friendships, have arguments, find work, make deals, play cards, smoke and drink. Certain bars tend to be frequented by those of a particular political persuasion, or of a particular social stratum. The only party *sezione* that ever opens, other than at election time is the local headquarters of the PCI. Members and adherents of other political parties congregate in a particular shop or bar owned by one of their members.

For the most part however, groups are not exclusive in this way and most bars are frequented by a wide range of people. Some have a particular attraction, for example, a billiards table. In addition there is an 'Avellino' football supporters club which is frequented mainly by older men who talk about the war together.

Hunting and fishing are also popular and exclusively male pastimes and manifest the opposition between inside and outside, female and male. Men always set off with food that has been prepared and packed by their wives. Whether anything is caught is not important. Rather the aim is to be outside, away from the home, worries, noise etc.

The relationship between husband and wife is considered to be a lifelong one although divorce has been available since the 70's. Few people would consider it, although we have seen some suggesting that it is better for couples to split up once they have stopped loving each other. There were only two cases of divorce at Grotta and both

were widely condemned. People express this condemnation however, not only by criticising or gossiping about individual cases locally but also by reference to events in the media. On one occasion, a news item described the case of a child who had a rare disease and whose mother it turned out was divorced. She was vehemently criticised by those watching for depriving the child of the full care that it merited.

Separations are more frequent but are also condemned. They are not only condemned, but extremely difficult to put into practice. In most cases the families linked by the marriage are closely involved in other ways and often interdependent. Even where this is not the case they rally round to try to patch things up if it looks as though a split is imminent. As much as anything else it would be a *brutta figura* for the families.

2.3.5. old age and death

As stressed, the marriage of one's children is the high point of adult life. In most cases this is soon followed by grandparenthood and inevitably, old age. When people get old they rarely live on their own but go to stay (or continue staying) with a son or a daughter. This is often, though not always, specifically so that they can assist with the raising of children.

It is generally agreed by young and old alike: *"E` bruttas la vecchiaia"* - "Old age is terrible". For the old themsleves it brings aches and pains, changes that they do not approve of in society, disorientation and alienation. They tend to retreat from the foreground of social life despite their often essential role. At meal times they will sit apart from the rest of the family and eat last with their meal on their lap. They feel generally out of place. In many cases their feelings are confirmed by the attitudes of people towards them. They are regarded as being *matto* (mad) and *rimbambito* (senile; literally, reverted to childhood). They are frequently blamed for causing domestic arguments. *"E` vecchia, non capisc'"* - "She's old, she doesn't understand" was a common criticism of an old woman who complained of the behaviour of her married granddaughter. At the same time it would be considered reprehensible to leave an old person to look after themselves or to put them in a home.

People are familiar with death from an early age. It is made public in various ways. When someone dies, black-bordered posters with a crucifix or some other religious symbol are posted up around the town on walls and doors. These announce the date and time of death and are usually commissioned by family members, friends or some organisation to which the deceased was attached (union, place of work, club etc.). They commend the deceased and, where appropriate, offer condolences to the family.

Purple cloth is draped around the doorway of the house and people go to pay their last respects to the deceased and to comfort relatives. The idea of isolation at this time is quite repugnant to people, almost unthinkable (c.f. Silverman 1975: 209). A young man discussing whether to go and pay his respects to a distant relative, decided in favour saying, with a visible shiver, that if he did not, the deceased's relatives would perhaps not come to his own funeral.

Another visible reminder of death on an everyday basis is the wearing of black for mourning. The amount of black worn and the length of time it is worn, varies according to a person's relationship with the deceased, their age and sex and the extent to which they adhere to the tradition. A widow may wear black for several years, in some cases until death. However, if she is young it is not expected that she should continue public mourning for an extensive period. However, the death of *any* close relative prompts the wearing of black and so older women can expect to wear the colour of mourning for many years, since in all likelihood they will have more relatives who have died. Men tend to wear a black tie, an armband or a small round black cloth badge pinned to the lapel of their jacket. It is also common for older women to wear a badge or locket with a photograph of the deceased husband or child.

Any kind of entertainment is regarded as disrespectful and frivolous in the period immediately after a death. Close relatives will stay indoors and some will keep the television switched off. Such restrictions are also observed during serious illness. When I asked a young man engaged to a girl whose father was seriously ill if he was going to a football match, he replied:

> *Come posso andare alla partita quando mio suocero sta così?*
>
> How could I go to the match when my father-in-law is in this condition?

This does not mean that everyone goes around with long faces. Treatment of death is extremely matter-of-fact, even offhand at times. At the same time visiting increases and people ask openly about details of events leading up to death. Almost always they will be provided with an account of every detail usually accompanied by a visible display of emotion.

Work also comes to a standstill. Those who own shops close down and stay shut for a minimum of eight days. When they wish to open again, another Mass is said for the

deceased and people go to offer their condolences again. The immediate family line up outside the church and shake hands with the sympathisers.

Opinions vary about this practice and about the mourning period in general. Some say that those who return to normal working life after only eight days are greedy and mean, think only of money. Others regard these practices as somewhat backward and uncivilised and extremely morbid. Again, young people and others who wished to dissociate themselves from such traditions were the quickest to voice these criticisms. They usually attributed such practices to Sicilians and Neapolitans. As with marriage practices stories were told to elicit the amazement and horror of the listener. In one example a woman described to me how a child in her class had written in an essay that her favourite day of the year was *Tutti Morti* (All Souls' Day) because everyone ate white chocolate skulls. Others were quick to attack the mourning restrictions as *esaggerato* (over the top) and *repressivo, incivili.*

As in all the main junctures of the life-cycle, the Church is closely involved in the practices surrounding death. In fact it is perhaps here that the Church comes into its own. It is involved not just in administering the Sacrament of the Sick (Last Rites) and in the funerals of particular people but rather provides constant reminders of death through the doctrine of salvation it teaches. This is given varying expression throughout the year but is particularly impressed upon people during Lent and Easter, and on the feast days of All Souls and All Saints (See Chapter Nine).

Funerals themselves are major events for the whole community, though particularly of course, for the family concerned. In most cases they take place very quickly, the day after death. The coffin is carried from the home to the church by four close male relatives or friends, led by the priest, and as it proceeds along *il corso* it is followed by the hearse and a number of open-topped limousines carrying branches of palm on the sides with a purple sash bearing the name of the giver and their relationship to the deceased. Several others usually carry more palms and then a procession of people follow behind and into the church. The bells announce the approach with a solemn tolling which quickens and rises in pitch as the coffin enters the doors. Shops close their shutters and those on the sidelines watching bless themselves and sometimes wave to the coffin as it passes.

Careful note is taken of who is present at the event and this did indeed vary according to the status of the deceased. The death of a *notabile* will induce the presence of most of the men of the elite. On the other hand the procession for one of the suicide

victims mentioned above though larger than normal, was made up mainly of women and young people. The number and size of the palms are also commented upon. In addition the hearse is important. These are far more elaborate affairs than in Britain and in some cases must be described almost as lorries. One in particular had intricate fibre glass bodywork in a Baroque style with two life-size angels at the back, a half-size recumbent figure of Christ inside, complete with wounds, together with assorted angels, electric 'candles' and two large lamps on either side.

After the Mass, the procession reassembles and goes to the cemetery. Usually more people join it at this stage. It is taken into the chapel and a final blessing is made before it is interred.

3. Summary

From the above account of the family and the life cycle at Grotta, it can be seen that the relationships surrounding families are of paramount importance in everyday life. Each stage in the developmental cycle is ritually marked in ways which serve to reinforce these relationships. In some contexts, the processes of integration have served to strengthen family relationships. However, more importantly than this, it has been shown that at each of these stages, relationships and attitudes have become imbued with a concern with images of backwardness and modernity. 'Traditional' practices are frequently condemned as *arretrati* and *incivili*. Maintaining a *bella figura* depends less on adhering to a locally defined code of values than on adopting a visibly modern lifestyle - calling one's children 'modern' names, making videos of ceremonies, discouraging children from speaking dialect. Those who reject such practices come to be defined in terms of the wider classification, as *gente arretrata*.

Let us now turn to the way in which people place themselves in terms of class and status.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Sense of Place and the Allocation of Class and Status

1. Introduction

In Chapter Five the basic social strata of the community were outlined. It emerged that the three tier distinction between peasants, artisans/tradesmen and professionals/landowners was no longer appropriate. A much more heterogeneous and fluid structure has developed as a result of the manifold processes of integration.

Within this fluid structure, the legitimacy of the claims of individuals and families to membership of a particular stratum are not always clear. It is the purpose of this chapter to look at the principles underlying the allocation of class and status. How *do* people position themselves within this structure on a day to day basis and how are they positioned by others? What are the criteria according to which one's own position and that of others is established? How do people present and represent themselves as members of a class or social stratum?

Once again the aim will not be to provide a comprehensive account of the nature of stratification in Grotta, but rather to look at the part played by the core-periphery relationship in determining the extent and character of people's claims. In doing so it is important to recognise that such claims are a matter of dispute and struggle. They are made on what is contested ground. Moreover, this contested ground is not just a matter of local differences, but is rather the much wider arena defined precisely by the core-periphery relationship in its specifically southern Italian guise.

2. Class and honour in the Traditional Community

Honour, and its polar opposite, shame, pervade the anthropological literature not only of southern Italy but of the entire Mediterranean. They are moral terms used as the means of assessing social position. As Davis puts it, honour "is the social recognition of self-importance" (Davis,J. 1969: 69). Self-assessment is dependent on evaluation by society/the group: only through the public recognition of one's claim to honour is it possible to have a personal sense of honour.

The bestowal of honour is both ascribed and achieved. It depends on a person's pre-existing position in the social hierarchy, the inherited reputation of their family. At the same time it can be enhanced or damaged by their everyday actions and behaviour. Thus also:

> members of the same household usually have the same honour and the behaviour of any one person can alter the esteem in which the others are held.
>
> (ibid: 70).

The qualities and attributes that confer honour are manifold, ranging from conformity to general moral precepts, to appearance and bodily carriage - a way of standing and walking. Most often emphasis is placed on sexuality, and specifically on a man's ability to control the women of his family/group. To ensure that one's wife is faithful and that one's daughters and unmarried sisters remain *casta e pura*, is to act honourably. To fail in these respects is to be dishonoured.

However, just as important is a man's ability to provide for his family, and for his wife to translate this provisioning into the respectable public presentation of her husband and children in terms of clothing, diet and health, and of the home in terms of order and cleanliness. At the same time these aspects cannot be entirely separated from sexuality since failure in them also tends to imply sexual laxity.

Most importantly for this section, honour is intimately related to the distribution of power and material wealth in society and involves the acceptance of hierarchy. Indeed Davis goes so far as to say that there is a *direct* relationship here with wealth conferring honour and poverty dishonour (Davis, J. 1973: 26) [cf. also Colclough 1969: 106: *"le corne dei signori sono di paglia* " - the 'horns' of the gentry are made of straw]. This is a corollary of the fact that honour is ascribed as well as achieved and attributed as well as claimed. Thus an individual or family cannot simply move up the scale through conformity to the ideal of honour. Rather they must conform to the expectations appropriate to their position, deferring to their superiors in honour and demanding deference from their inferiors.

Honour is constantly assessed with almost all actions scrutinised by the collective gaze. This involves occasions of public display (e,g. life-cycle rituals) as much as everyday actions - food eaten, clothes worn, items bought, visitors received and visits made, work done or not done, deals and transactions made or not made, etc.

The effectivity of public scrutiny is dependent upon a certain closeness of contact and, above all, on gossip:

> Pisticcesi know that their behaviour will be observed and gossiped about; this, they recognise freely, is the chief constraint on their behaviour and it is one which many people resent bitterly.
> (Davis 1969: 74)

The point is put much more strongly by Bourdieu, albeit for a very different society. He suggests that the importance attached to honour is characteristic of societies

> in which the relationship with others through its intensity, intimacy and continuity, takes precedence over the relationship one has with oneself; ... in which the being and truth about a person are identical with the being and truth that others acknowledge in him. In groups whose members are well known to each other ... the control of public opinion is exercised at every moment ... Penned inside this enclosed microcosm in which everybody knows everybody, condemned without the possibility of escape or relief to live with others, every individual experiences deep anxiety about 'people's words', 'weighty, cruel and inexorable'.
> (Bourdieu 1965: 212)

This quotation repeats the double aspect of honour: the individual sense and group recognition[1]. In addition it emphasises that the code of honour arises in relatively isolated, closed communities and points to the power of language and representation to constitute a person's social being.

As might be expected in isolated communities, the requirements of honour are often at variance with the moral and legal dictates of the wider society, particularly the State - hence for example the imperative to commit homicide for reasons of honour despite the State's condemnation of such action.

Finally there is in most accounts of such societies evidence that the people themselves have an *explicit* ideology of honour and a concomitant and constant self-consciousness of how they are 'measuring up'. People know what is at stake (i.e. their honour) and engage in strategies to maintain it intact or increase it - casting aspersions on the honour of others, trying to outdo them, falling out, taking and giving offence etc.

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[1] See also Pitt-Rivers 1965: 21ff for a discussion of this.

3. Appropriating the Symbols of Modernity

In the ethnography presented so far, particularly in the previous section on the family, there are many examples which demonstrate an *apparent* local concern with honour as defined above: the concern for *la bella figura*, the display involved in life-cycle rituals; the predominance of males in the *piazza* and at the local discotheque.

However there was never any explicit appeal to its dictates. Some observers have concluded from similar situations in southern Italy that the code of honour has, quite simply, been eclipsed:

> the world of relatively intact stable institutions in which people's identities were inevitably attached to their institutional roles is passing into memory; the moral character of these communities has been profoundly altered - no man today is 'a man as he should be'
> (Ryan, D.P., in press)

The interpretation is a simple Durkheimian one in which society moves from the traditional to the modern, from mechanical to organic solidarity, from emphasis on the collectivity to emphasis on the individual. Thus concentrating on education, Ryan goes on to describe how it subverts

> the traditional stratification system by making the *individual* the unit of ranking and his *personal* qualities that which is ranked (ibid).

Ryan's viewpoint is supported in other literature. In Berger's essay "On the obsolescence of the concept of honour" (1970) the 'honour' of traditional society is replaced by the ideas of 'dignity' and the 'rights of the individual'.

Whatever the truth of this interpretation, in my view it is in danger of reproducing, or at least going no further than, the stereotypical opposites discussed in Chapter 1; of accepting the basis of the classification that it is the object of the thesis to analyse. In representing the very real transformation that has taken place it is necessary to show how the code of honour has been accommodated to the new system since it has not simply disappeared.

On the one hand then, people seem to be still engaged in the same kind of assessments. On the other hand, the standard to which they are appealing in doing so does not seem to be the collective ethic of honour. To what then *are* they appealing, and *with* what are they appealing if it is not an internalised sense of honour?

In my view, what they are appealing to is a standard of *modernity*. In other words, their sense of honour, their sense of self, has become a self-consciousness about where they fit in, how they measure up in relation to the dictates of modernity. In this view of things, avoidance of dishonour becomes avoidance of backwardness. The logic of this transformation, given the kinds of processes that have been discussed, is not difficult to grasp. Continuity with the past is maintained. Although people's lives have been drastically changed, there has been no sudden abandonment of values but a subtle accommodation or appropriation of local values to the wider 'core' classification.

The point can be illustrated by returning to the quotation from Bourdieu above (op cit, 1965). There he was emphasising the power of the group and its *words* to impose a unified definition of self based on the possession, or lack, of honour. This then takes us back to the argument in Chapter One in discussing the effectivity of images and representations. Quoting again from Bourdieu it was argued that "the fate of groups is bound up with the words that designate them" (Bourdieu 1984: 481) and that, as Barthes puts it, "to name is to judge" (Barthes 1973: 34).

In my view it is possible to translate the power of 'people's words' in the local arena to the power of the images and representations in the much wider arena of the post-1960s period. These images and representations thus become the 'gossip' of modernity. People are backward or modern because the core says they are - in a myriad of different ways - just as they were honourable or dishonourable because the group said they were. In these terms then we can understand the practical effectivity of the images and representations of the South in everyday life.

I do not wish to present the situation as quite so much of a Weberian 'iron cage' as Bourdieu seems to do. Nevertheless it is important to understand that the core is in an infinitely more powerful position than the periphery and can thus more readily legitimise its view of the world. It has control of the means of classification and thus for people on the periphery, entering into this classification, seeking recognition, involves a great deal of risk whether they choose to accept or oppose its dictates.

3.1. Contadini and Operai - the Strati Popolari

Let us start then with the lower echelons of local society which as we saw in the previous chapter consisted largely of peasants and manual workers, many of whom were frequently unemployed. As we have seen these groups cannot be simply lumped together as one. Neither can they be clearly demarcated as separate. The life history of any single individual or family may mean that they straddle both categories and perhaps others (for example. emigrant). There are however,important cultural differences in being classified as one or the other. Furthermore, many of those who are classified in these groups by virtue of background, may by educational and/or economic achievement belong higher up the social scale. Given this situation, how do people in these categories place themselves, and how are they placed by others within the local hierarchy? Let us look first at the *contadini*.

Contadini

In the previous chapter it was shown that very few people are still active in agriculture and the majority of those are elderly. Strictly speaking therefore, *'contadini'* are few in number. Yet one of the most striking features of contemporary Grotta is the way in which the position ascribed to those from a peasant background has been reproduced. The cultural divide between *paese* and *campagna* remains a wide one. Just as in the 'traditional' community, the peasantry were the most dishonourable, so in today's community they are the most backward. They are to townspeople what southerners are to northerners - and this is not just a coincidental homology. Rather, much of the time the townspeople are using, in my opinion, precisely the same classification; they are associating themselves with the core and not only dissociating themselves from the *contadini* but also from that part of themselves that is 'southern'.

Thus, the *contadini* are ignorant, dirty, illiterate, uncivilised, bad-mannered, greedy, avaricious, money-grabbing, poorly dressed, ill-spoken, uncouth, incestuous; the women are licentious but also *più caldo* (hotter) and *tosto* (hard, firm). The list of pejoratives is endless. The most vociferous in this *disprezzamento* (contempt, disdain) are other manual workers and the *petite bourgeoisie* although almost all townspeople had a bad word to say about them. There seemed to be a deep-seated distaste for life in the *campagna*:

è brutto stare in campagna Michele, si sta sempre solo; i cafoni stanno sempre a zappare come bestie

living in the country is horrible Michael, you're always alone; the *cafoni* are always digging, like beasts

Tilling the soil was a mindless activity, fit only for animals. Better to live in a hole in the ground in the town than to have a big house in the country. There is nothing to do and no-one to meet. Everyone goes to bed early and if you are ever sick or in need there is no-one there to help you. Such were common judgements of life in the country.

But there is more to these judgements than a simple local opposition. Rather, the traditional dishonour of the peasantry has in fact become the 'modern backwardness' of the peasantry; their traditional failings have been accommodated to the new requirements of the wider core classification.

The new-found wealth of the *contadini* was regarded as ill-gotten or at least inappropriate to their nature. *"Col tabacco si son fatti ricchi - tutti"* - "They've got rich on tabacco - all of them". *"Sono sempre cafoni"* - "They're peasants all the same", they would say. The tone of this kind of statement was always disdainful, grudging. The implication was that they *ought not* to be rich. By definition they were greedy and money-grabbing. *"Stanno benissimo, c'hanno troppi soldi"* - "They're very well off, they've got too much money". More significantly they were said to be incompetent and mean with their money:

Hai visto come vestono? Non sanno curarsi, Vogliono nascondere il fatto che si son fatti ricchi. C'è ancora molto ignoranza in questo paese, sopratutto fra i contadini.

Have you seen how they dress? They don't know how to look after their appearance. They want to hide the fact that they've got rich. There's still a great deal of ignorance in this town, especially among the peasants.

In fact there was little room for escape from such judgements for the *contadini* unless they *really* did cease to be *contadini* and were accepted into the *ceto medio* by virtue of education and wealth. For the most part, those who did attempt to adopt the manners and lifestyle of 'modernity' (by wearing fashionable clothes, spending more time in the town, getting out of agriculture, participating in the various forms of legitimate consumption etc.) were ridiculed for their incompetent efforts: *"Non sanno comportarsi da persone civile"* - "They don't know how to behave like civilised persons". They were

laughed at and ridiculed for over-dressing, being too showy and consequently proving themselves to be *"più cafoni che mai"* - "More peasant-like than ever".

We can see then, that there was a constant denial of the claims of peasants to legitimacy; a refusal to accept them and, significantly, a refusal couched not in the terms of honour and dishonour but in terms of the representations of backwardness and modernity with which we are concerned.

However, it would be wrong to suppose that in every interaction between *borghese* and *contadino*, the former insulted the latter. Things are of course much more complex than this and particularly in the present situation where the definition of someone as *contadino* is not as clear-cut as it was before. It is not a matter of pointing to a member of a discrete group but of understanding the relationship between self-definition and social classification. As Bourdieu puts it:

> ... the representation which individuals and groups inevitably project through their practices and properties is an integral part of social reality. A class is defined as much by its being perceived as by its being, by its consumption ... as much as by its position in the relations of production.
>
> (Bourdieu 1984: 483)

So much for the way in which *contadini* are classified. What about their own self-positioning within this context? How do they see themselves as fitting in, and how do they react to, get round, avoid or accept the various more or less subtle ways in which they are subordinated and denigrated?.

Firstly, there is no great chorus of opposition among *contadini* to the judgement of the *borghesi*, asserting the dignity of peasant life. This is in keeping with the well-known disdain of southern Italians of all classes for manual labour. Peasants are anxious to shake off, distance themselves from their background and to associate themselves with what is perceived to be modern, *civile*. It must be remembered of course that this background was often in the past one of acute poverty.

In some cases, this is quite successful where an individual achieves a level of economic and/or educational success sufficient to demonstrate that he/she has moved up the social ladder. Those who succeed in this way do not hesitate themselves to criticise the *contadini* in exactly the same way as described above. One example is of a young man about to graduate in civil engineering at Naples University. Both his parents were *contadini* who had managed to give their children an education. The whole family were also staunch supporters of the Communist Party (PCI). He was a vociferous defender of the

rights of workers and peasants and a constant critic of the 'corrupt' Christian Democrats both locally and nationally. He was always impeccably dressed in sophisticated and fashionable clothes, with none of the usual gaudiness and *'pacchianeria'* (bad taste) of most socially mobile peasants. More importantly, his practical rejection of his own background did not stop at the acceptance of the style of modernity but rather extended to the denigration of the peasantry. He would frequently complain of the latter's lack of *civlità*, their meanness and their *mentalità arretrata*.

A more common reaction to their situation among the *contadini* however, is not to engage in such active refusal of their background, but rather simply to adopt modern lifestyles and tastes. In this it must be remembered that they are responding to representations communicated not only through those that oppose them at the local level but also directly through the various influences of integration which have been discussed throughout (the media, education, emigration etc.).

To some extent this is a natural outcome of the movement out of agriculture and into other economic activities which are modern in character. However, it is certainly not all a matter of economics.

Throughout the social hierarchy there is today a widespread acceptance of the legitimacy of education. The *contadini* took education very seriously, perhaps more so than the townspeople. Some teachers did point out - albeit from a rather patronising point of view - that children from the *campagna* were far more obedient and well-behaved than their peers from the town. This was put down to the fact that their parents were more traditional and therefore stricter (*più severo*) in instilling in them the need to get academic qualifications. However, it is also a reflection of an overall disposition that derives from occupying the lowest strata in the social classification and produces a desire to keep a low profile, avoid ridicule etc.

The school environment itself, quite apart from the knowledge that is imparted, is extremely influential in relation to the development of people's sense of place. Children are taught to be students rather than tillers of the soil, making it highly unlikely that they will return to agriculture after their education.

The school to an extent takes over from the family as the locus of the fostering of legitimate culture, and to the extent that families accept this the two are mutually reinforcing. However, what perhaps varies between the social strata and the generations is the *way* in which it is accepted. Older people from a peasant background tend to view

it instrumentally as the best means of gaining access to resources. For children from peasant families, experience of school entails the development of a whole set of dispositions and attitudes. Compared to land and honour, educational achievements (while bringing prestige to the family) are more of an individual possession and are awarded by institutions which advocate the importance of personal development.

To whatever extent they actually learn to speak 'correct' Italian, children of peasant extraction certainly learn that 'correct' Italian is the language of *persone educate* and dialect, particularly their dialect, is the language of *cafoni, maleducati* - and here 'educated' and 'uneducated' mean as much 'polite', 'well-mannered' and *vice versa* as they do 'well-instructed' 'knowledgeable' and *vice versa.*

Going to school also entails new kinds of relationships between parents, children and teachers. Parents are aware, for example of the pressure on their children to conform to the latest fashions. Indeed the expectations come from other parents in many cases. Thus most children go to school in the same kinds of clothes (with differences that will emerge subsequently) - jeans, colourful jackets, fluorescent rucksacks etc. Complying with such demands involves no great conflict of values nor is this necessarily an explicit attempt to prevent their children being dubbed *cafoni.* There is however, in my view, a positive attempt to associate with modernity, to acquire the symbols of a civilised lifestyle.

This was the case in most areas of domestic consumption with those of peasant background favouring what was considered to be modern in terms of house furnishings and fittings, clothing and entertainment. As a result, they distance themselves from 'tradition' as much as anyone else even if those of other strata can still contrive to dub their modernity backward. More detail about consumption among the *contadini* will be presented in the next section as the patterns are similar among the *operai.*

Operai

I will now turn to the other representatives of the *strati popolari* - the *operai* or 'workers'. In using this term I intend to refer to all those from relatively poor backgrounds who live in the town and who are, or are seeking to be, employed in manual labour. This includes labourers in the construction industry, some lorry drivers, some workers in industry both at Fiat and elsewhere, some of the new *artigiani* (car mechanics, panelbeaters, radio technicians etc.), some peddlars and small *commercianti,* as well as those public employees who do manual or 'menial' jobs - street cleaners, gardeners, toilet attendants, messengers, school cleaners and janitors. They cannot be rigidly separated from the *contadini* since they often have a peasant background even if they no longer work in

agriculture. Finally, many who belong to this category are either returned emigrants or incomers from other towns. The majority live in the various groups of *case popolari* that have been built since 1960 although some continue to live in the pre-fabs or 'containers' provided in the emergency period after both earthquakes.

It is inappropriate to refer to this stratum as 'the proletariat' or the 'working class' in any taken-for-granted sociological sense. Some people do refer to the *classe operaia* - the working class. Just as frequent however, are *i strati popolari* or *i classi meno abbienti* - the less-well off classes.

One thing that perhaps distinguishes this stratum of society, according to the middle class and elite, is their classification as *cattivi* - 'bad' people. They are not denigrated in quite the same way or to quite the same extent as the *contadini* although they are still considered to be less *civile* and *colto* (cultured, cultivated) than the *piccola borghesia*. More than this however, they are looked upon with suspicion; they are not accepted. It is from their ranks that are said to spring many of the modern evils of the community - violence, vandalism, drugs, theft, bad language etc. *"E` cattiva gente"* was a daily phrase used in the assessment of individuals and families of this stratum.

One of the reasons for the suspicion and indeed fear surrounding this stratum of the population was that they were seen to be *furbo* (cunning) and unscrupulous in their economic affairs. If they had managed to become wealthy this could not be put down to hard work but indicated some form of shady dealings.

In the same way as for *contadini* then, doubt was cast on their entitlement to riches and any qualifications that they had were regarded as in some way suspect, obtained at a price.

The fear and suspicion is in many ways quite warranted since the process of integration has enabled many people from poor backgrounds to compete directly for resources previously distributed according to the desires of a restricted section of the population. In the circumstances, the possibility of this continuing was a real one, increasing the anxieties of the middle class. In many cases it was only a matter of time before they *did* move up the social scale. Once established economically, they were able to put their offspring through University and get them into professional jobs.

Workers are not seen as quite as backward as *contadini*. Nevertheless they are seen as *incolto*, (uneducated), vulgar, violent and unscrupulous and while manual labour is not as negatively valued as working the land, it is still a low status activity.

But even in the eyes of other strata of Grottese society, it would be wrong to characterise the workers solely as *cattivi* in the various senses described above. This would be somewhat unrealistic since it would imply that there existed between them and the rest of the population almost entirely and continuously antagonistic relations. Nevertheless, even in praising them for good qualities or acknowledging their difficulties, those of other classes, or at least those who felt themselves to be superior, maintained the separation from them. For their part, the *operai* involved usually deferred as was appropriate.

On one occasion the teachers and staff of the *scuola media* at Grotta had a meal together. This was an established event, taking place at least annually. On this occasion it was the turn of Felice the *bidello* (janitor) to give the meal. Expectations of excellent Grottesi fare, in large quantity, were high. Felice was *un vero grottese*- a real Grottese. Indeed their expectations were fulfilled as the meal proceeded and each course produced yet another traditional surprise. All of this produced a great deal of conversation as well as praise for Felice, who responded with embarrassment and deference. He was always referred to by his first name, while he reciprocated with the title of the person he was talking to - in this case almost everyone was *professore.* He was spoken to in the familiar *'tu'* and responded with the formal *'Lei'*. Several of Fellice's relatives came to assist with serving the meal and although the teachers laughed and joked with their hosts, they also acted with a certain brusqueness, demanding to be brought more of this or that, or to have something else taken away or changed. There was a definite granting and demanding of deference that was quite absent on other similar occasions where all present were of the same or similar backgrounds.

The importance of the images and representations of the core in the lives of the *strati popolari* at Grotta can be seen more clearly if we turn to take a closer look at their own self-definition, their sense of place in the modern world and particularly their taste for what might be called 'popular culture'. In some of what follows I will refer to both *operai* and *contadini* since there are many similarities.

Education, just as for the *contadini,* is seen as extremely important, although they are not unrealistic about the chances of their children. Most of their children are enrolled in the *Istituto Tecnico* rather than the *Liceo Classico* for example - they do not expect them to go to university to become lawyers and doctors, unless they have themselves already achieved a higher level of status through the success of a small business, savings from emigration etc.

In terms of job prospects it is this stratum of the population that is most liable to unemployment. Consequently, it is also the stratum from which come most of those who still choose emigration as a 'survival strategy'. This is increasingly uncommon because of economic recession or 'rationalisation' in the host countries or regions.

In their knowledge of the 'outside world' the *operai* displayed a variety of competences. Sometimes this also seemed related to emigration. Those who had been away for long periods were often fluent in another European language and also well acquainted with and attached to the country to which they had gone. Others, while possessing this knowledge, were much happier to be back and criticised their host countries. However, there were also a few examples who were much more resistant to assimilation into a foreign way of life. One man had been in England for over 25 years and could not speak a word of English. Others described how their wives had hated America or England or Belgium so much that they had become ill and lost weight.

What was clear in the attitudes of working-class emigrants towards the world beyond Grotta was that their knowledge was based not on any intellectual or scholastic learning but on practical experience and/or stereotypical representations. They would describe how their neighbours were *freddo* (cold), unwilling even to say 'good morning' or 'hello' but at the same time they respected what they saw as the 'correctness' of Northern Europeans (c.f. Chapter Nine).

Let us turn then to look at patterns of consumption to get a better picture of the nature of this heterogeneous stratum of *Grottese* society. Detailing all the specifics would not be particularly useful since fashions change and are modified rapidly. Choosing to follow such fashions in itself entails a certain acceptance of and association with 'modernity'; an acceptance of the core culture which produces them and a refusal of 'tradition', 'backwardness', the periphery. This is so whether or not the choice is expressed explicitly as such. In accordance with Bourdieu's position (expressed both in his 1977 and 1984 works) and with a long-standing tradition in anthropology, it is often the *unspoken* that is most revealing of people's social position, their sense of place. Thus it is of paramount importance to look at the dispositions associated with a way of dressing, or of cooking and eating, or of furnishing and decorating a home. These things are not learned through the educational system (although being at school plays its part) but are inculcated from an early age: people's choices in food, clothing and other goods "are particularly revealing of deep-rooted and long-standing dispositions" (Bourdieu 1984: 77).

One of the most important areas of consumption among all classes is food. Eating is an aspect of their lives to which everyone attaches great importance. Throughout the South a substantial proportion of income is spent on food[2]. Both *contadini* and *operai* have a matter-of-fact attitude towards food, talking about it constantly - comparing the quality and price of this year's wine as against last or how tasty today's *sugo* (sauce) is against yesterday's. After the obligatory greeting of *"Addo vai? "* "Where are you going ?" and its reply, the second question that they invariably ask each other, relates to food. *"Che prepari oggi ?"* "What are you making today?" or *"Hai mangiato ancora ?"* "Have you eaten yet ?" or *"Che hai mangiato ?"* "What did you have to eat ?" The replies vary but conform to a certain format. They are informative and come from a limited range. The listener will know exactly what is being talked about and will undoubtedly be eating the same thing or have done so recently. Women compare variations to basic local recipes - but they do not describe them as 'recipes'.

There is a great deal of conformity in eating habits. People from this stratum do not often compare their diet with that of other classes or other people elsewhere. When they do it is to emphasise the goodness of their own food or to express a positive distaste - usually for the pre-packed convenience foods that increasingly fill the shops or for the kind of food they eat in the North or in England. *"Teniamo tutta roba buona. E' tutto naturale, dalle campagne nostre"* - "It's all good stuff that we have. It's all natural, from our own countryside."

Food is thus one area in which there is strong resistance to the dictates of modernity. Part of this is related to the importance attached to the public presentation of the family which includes feeding them well with the right food prepared in the correct manner. The effortless task of feeding one's family convenience foods is regarded as a departure from one's duty as a wife and mother - a sign of incompetence and laxity in these roles.

However, it would be wrong to over-emphasise the conformity in views in relation to food among this stratum. There are those who do not have access to the networks through which local produce is distributed or the time and family support to prepare all the preserves that most families do. Once again, these are often returned

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[2]This is usually taken as another indicator of backwardness/underdevelopment. If the proportion of disposable income put towards subsistence is high it means that the amount left over for luxury items and consumer goods is reduced - this is extremely revealing of the core standard definition of what constitutes 'development'

emigrants. Moreover, their children and indeed young people in general *are* more amenable to convenience foods and busy parents will often comply, particularly if the mother is working as well. On many occasions I watched young children obstinately refusing 'traditional' food and demanding fish fingers or frankfurter sausages.

The preparation of food is extremely important and occupies a great deal of women's time. The *sugo* for the midday meal must be started in the morning by 11am at the latest. In many cases mothers are working and so this is impossible without the assistance of a female relative, usually a grandmother. This in itself tends to reinforce established eating practices.

In the 1960's, Davis used the example of a family eating rabbit sauce as a way of discussing social mobility. This was thought to be a somewhat 'uppity' thing to do. However, today, meat of all kinds is a regular and *required* feature of most people's diets, including working people. At the same time tripe and liver are more commonly eaten among this stratum than others and both are considered as 'traditional' foods.

The *classe operaio* at Grotta can be characterised by looking at other areas of consumption. As stressed most workers live in the *case popolari* which are usually small two-bedroomed apartments with a kitchen and bathroom. In some there was a large entrance area that could be used as a lounge. These dimensions, as well as the general lack of funds, set limits on the furniture and fittings available to this stratum. A great deal of furniture was bought when a couple got married and whatever the class, this tended to be fairly expensive and elaborate. The operai had the cheapest of these good quality items, however, and any furniture bought after this initial outlay was always very basic.

Bathrooms always had plain white fittings and in many cases only a 'half bath'. Floors and walls would always have plain tiles. Beds were usually plain metal frames without headboard and mattresses were sometimes traditional wool ones inherited from parents. Almost always they would be single and to form a double bed, two would be put together. The bed in the *camera matrimoniale* usually had a wooden surround. Most houses had a fitted kitchen. In most cases people would go to local retailers for these goods. As mentioned in Chapter Five, the latter did a great deal of trade by catalogue and were able to get hold of various qualities of goods.

Ornaments and pictures and the various fittings around the home were another feature of class distinction; record players were usually old, certainly unlike the stereo systems of the middle classes. Most families from *operaio* and *contadino* backgrounds

would have a healthy scattering of religious icons around each room - at least a crucifix and a picture of the Pope. These would be accompanied by a selection of postcards from relatives who had emigrated and photos of relatives who had died or of young children in the family. These would be placed behind the glass of cabinets which contained glasses and china and on top of which would be trinkets and souvenirs from a holiday at the sea or from emigration (e.g. Swiss beer mugs with their names on the side, mini Empire State Buildings etc)

As we have seen already clothing and fashion in general are important matters of distinction and public presentation. Moreover, this is an area in which the influence of 'modernity' is particularly visible. All social classes are concerned with fashion and with appearance: clothing, hairstyle, accessories - and this is combined with fashion in music and other media tastes - particularly among the young.

Among older people of the *classe operaia* and *contadini* , these concerns were diminished. Women tended to wear plain skirts and tops - often black - together with black crocheted shawls and head scarves of various colours tied at the back of the neck. Women in mourning would often also wear badges and lockets with photos of a deceased husband or child. Men tended to wear plain/drab coloured jackets and trousers and white or light coloured shirts. These older people bought their clothing from the 'traditional' peddlars at the Monday market or from the more traditional local commercianti. They do not buy clothes very frequently.

Younger people, from children to middle-age, were much more modern in their dress, sporting the latest popular styles and colours of the year and of the particular season as described in the media and as sold and worn all over Italy. Indeed most of these fashions were little different from popular fashion in Britain at the time. It was important to have a particular shade or cut of jeans worn with a particular length of leg, and with a particular kind of sock and shoe. Within an infinite number of variations and combinations, there was regularity, conformity to a style, and where someone did not get it quite right they would be laughed at. Where a younger woman was in mourning she would still wear black but the clothes would be fashion clothes - instead of an unfashionable plain black crew neck jumper she would perhaps wear one with puffed sleeves and a black floral pattern in sequins.

Fashion is now part of everyday life for all classes - even for the older people of the lower classes whom we have described as somewhat resistant to it and attached to the *un*fashioned clothes of the traditional peddlars. Despite this resistance in their own

lives, they are nevertheless surrounded by fashion and are, for the most, part perfectly at ease with it. Those who *do* object do not escape it, as their judgement is relegated to the *mentalità arretrata* of the past.

Certainly there is no need today for those returning from emigration to slip off their 'European' coat and put on their traditional shawl to avoid the accusation of 'putting on airs' (c.f. Colclough 1969: 105). On the contrary, the pressure today is most definitely on being fashionable in 'core' terms. As we will see later however 'putting on airs' has not been outmoded, but like the definition of backwardness, transformed.

However it would be wrong to assume that this has somehow had a uniform equalising effect on the class system. Despite the heterogeneous and complex nature of stratification there is nevertheless a continued recognition and acceptance of hierarchy both in theory and practice. But the arena for the making and breaking of distinctions is one which goes beyond the local system to include the overall relationship between core and periphery and the opposition between backwardness and modernity that seems to lie at the root of this relationship.

The area of clothing and fashion is a particularly good one for looking at the nature of stratification in this transformed context. Fashion is by definition orientated towards the future and towards what is *new*. It dissociates itself from tradition and thus lends itself naturally to the distinctions between classes and age groups. Its efficacy lies in the fact that it distinguishes and when, as generally happens, an item or style becomes too popular, then it loses this efficacy. Hence the necessity for constant change. As might be expected it is the dominant classes who generally[3] 'set the pace', define what constitutes what is fashionable, while what other classes wear becomes imitation - indeed *cheap* imitation, tacky, kitsch. Despite the similarities, the distinctions can always be made in terms of quality of material and cut, the tastefulness of design. In colloquial terms, the goalposts are constantly being shifted and the distinctions remain. This will become clearer as we look at the lifestyle of other strata. For the time being let us look at the implications of the above for the *strati popolari* (the popular classes).

Although I have stressed the fact that the *operai* and the *contadini* are 'modern' in their dress, once again their modernity is, as far as the other classes are concerned, and as far as the dominant images are concerned, cheap, imitative, tacky. Most working

[3] In other contexts this is not true at all - e.g. popular fashion in the UK is often started by subordinate subcultures.

people buy their clothes at the Monday market or at the less expensive and stylish local shops. The market is to an extent *dominated* by the clothes stalls of slick *commercianti* from Naples, Salerno and Avellino selling 'the latest' in fashion clothing amidst the sound of 'the latest' hit pop-songs - at the time, Duran Duran, Stevie Wonder, Bob Marley. However the goods that people buy are usually acrylic rather than wool, plastic rather than leather, and rarely do they have a *marca* - the signature of a well-known designer or symbol of a legitimate company. If they do, then it will be pointed out by those of higher class that they are most likely contraband goods.

The market was largely frequented by women, most of whom were either *contadini* or the wives of *operai.* Middle class families generally avoided it. By the same token the evening *passeggiata* which brought people into the streets to shop as well as to take a walk was largely populated by the middle classes, with those of poorer backgrounds being absent. Consequently it was only occasionally, and precisely for special occasions, that the latter bought clothes with a recognizable *marca.*

Another strategy which enabled working people to follow fashion was to *make their own clothes,* emulating the styles in the shops. In the same way, old clothes would be altered to conform as best they could with the dictates of fashion.

The celebration of special occasions is another important form of consumption used as a means of distinction among the strata of Grottesi society. Items bought and presents given are vehicles for the affirmation of status and social position. Among the *strati popolari* , as might be expected, expense dictated the pattern of events. Parties were held less frequently than among the *ceto medio* and when they were, tended to be restricted to *familiari* and some *parenti.* Only rarely would any rich or influential guests be present. The meal, if there was one, would have fewer courses and be plainer and gifts given would be less ostentatious or to put it more plainly, cheaper. If there was an expensive gift this would be given pride of place and frequent mention made of the giver (in one case a washing machine given as a wedding present by a relative who had moved up the social scale). The same goes for the *bomboniere* which were in a few cases small plastic toys (unlike the crystal, china, brass *sopramobili* [ornaments, knick-knacks] of the *ceto medio*).

On one occasion a middle-class woman took out the *bomboniere* she had received at a wedding for the amusement of her friends. When they laughed she scolded them while holding back from laughing herself: *"Non ridere, non è giusto, sono poveri "* - "Don't laugh, it's not fair, they're poor". Finally, unlike among middle-class families, in nearly

all cases lower class newly-weds had no new home prepared for them and were either confined to live with one set of parents or, rarely, obtained rented accommodation.

However, this picture should not be taken as characteristic of all those of this stratum. As we saw earlier, families spend most of their working lives preparing to set up their offspring as new families. Therefore there were many cases where this work had enabled them to hold a much larger celebration. This was particularly so for weddings, but occasionally a big birthday party would be thrown also.

While some families certainly had celebrations well beyond their means that subsequently put them in financial difficulty, in many families savings could provide a big celebration plus substantial gifts of money and goods - particularly of furniture: huge mahogany wardrobes, cabinets, etc. However, such gifts were a 'one-off' - it would be unlikely, unless they themselves went on to become much richer, that the newly-weds would ever buy such items of furniture for themselves again. People of the middle-classes frequently described such celebrations as *'esaggerato'*- again with the implication that the *strati popolari* should not be able to afford a large celebration.

The final area of consumption that I wish to look at in relation to the *strati popolari* is the media and entertainment: people's likes and dislikes; what they watch or do not watch on the television; what they read in the newspapers; the *way* in which they watch TV and read newspapers; what music they like and dislike; how they spend their spare-time; what they regard as entertainment.

Newspapers have a very low circulation in Italy as compared with other European countries. This is partly because there is no 'tabloid' press. All the daily newspapers are 'quality' except for several which are entirely devoted to sport and these are indeed the most popular. In Grotta the pattern was largely similar. Sales of the two local *giornalai* were low given the size of the town and the sports papers were the most popular. However it must be observed that for everyone who actually *bought* a newspaper, there were at least four others who in practice read it.

Nevertheless my impression was that the *strati popolari* did not read much other than the sports news and particularly the football results. The latter were important not just because they were all football fans but for the *totocalcio* coupons - the Italian equivalent of the pools. Almost all men played these pools and both men and women took part in the national lotteries. The *strati popolari* tended to spend more time

and money on such pursuits and this was another source of criticism of them by the rest of the population.

Other reading included, for men - especially young men - pornographic magazines and very explicit cartoon strips. There was little objection from parents. Women typically read equivalents of women's magazines in Britain - particularly those with knitting patterns.

Sport was of great interest among the *operai* and the progress of an Italian in any international competition was followed avidly. But football and boxing were by far the most popular. Most young men played or watched their friends play football regularly and there were annual tournaments between *rioni* and also, later in the summer, between towns. Many belonged to football supporters' clubs - mainly those of teams in North Italy. One or two youths were also boxers. No such interest in practising boxing was found among higher social strata.

Other, particularly older, men went fishing or hunting almost every Sunday in the season - early and late summer. The most popular fishing venue was a trout farm some forty kilometres from Grotta. Fishermen would go there, buy a quantity of trout at the entrance which would be taken from a small tank and put in a basket. This would then be tipped into a larger pond/reservoir and fished for by everyone. Most of the trout were fairly small but occasionally the proprietor would put in an extra-large one netted from another small tank, to encourage those present.

A great deal of time was spent in the *piazza* , along *il Corso* and in the cafe-bars. Most bars were frequented by a broad cross-section of the hierarchy. However two or three seemed to be particularly patronised by *operai* . Here they played cards and drank and talked. A group of youths, mainly from working and emigrant backgrounds, drank quite heavily by local standards and smoked hash from time to time. Their main meeting place was the 'pub'/*pizzeria* opened recently by a returned emigrant. This *pizzeria* was similar to many other places in Italy which attempted to imitate or incorporate the style of American and English bars. They sometimes described themselves as such or even simply called the establishment 'American Pub'. They sold, and people drank, beer rather than the more 'traditional' wine and usually had a wide selection of foreign beers always including Guinness. Some young men of operaio background frequented a similar place to the Grotta *pizzeria* in Avellino town. Unfortunately the proprietor - presumably a returnee - had not done his homework properly and called his establishment 'Hot Shit

Pizza'. Another new one in Avellino was called 'Drive-in' after an extremely popular spectacular variety show which will be discussed below.

Music was another area in which all classes, and the *strati popolari* no less than any other, sought to associate themselves with national and international tastes. British and American popular music was closely followed while the most popular national music was that performed annually in a singer-songwriter competition at San Remo in Northern Italy. This is an extremely glitzy affair which is televised with a great deal of hype. All the performers are seen and heard constantly in the media for months afterwards - particularly the winners. Almost all the songs were romantic love songs - similar in theme to the traditional Neapolitan love songs - also quite popular - but without the 'folksie' lilt and with a much more luscious production.

It is frequently pointed out in the literature, with a somewhat patronising surprise, that 'even' southern Italian peasants are fond of opera, the highest of high-brow arts. This was in fact true of most people I met at Grotta of whatever social strata, particularly where someone in the family played or used to play in the town band. But it would be wrong to imagine that the *strati popolari* spent a great deal of time listening to opera. Rather, they regarded it as part of their cultural patrimony as Italians, and in practice were far more attentive to the kind of music just described.

A great deal of time was spent in the home with the television on. Every family had a colour television and regarded it as strange to be without one. Some had more than one, with children having their own, sometimes black and white portable, in their bedroom. Video recorders were not common however, at least among the lower strata. For much of the time, television was a background to other conversations and activities. It remained switched on for long periods and was never switched off for visitors - unless they were particularly important (for example, the priest). It was switched off in the initial period of mourning when a close family member had died. However this period was only about eight days long. This was also a time when the house *was* filled more than usual with visitors.

Although it was often just background noise and images, it was not ignored. Not just anything was left on. In this it was very much like the way in which music is often listened to. If something which anyone present particularly liked came on they would stop and listen, telling others to keep quiet and turning the sound up; if it was *not* liked it would be turned over until something more palatable was found. Generally speaking 'light entertainment' was left on - quiz shows, pop music programmes, variety shows, American

soap operas and detective serials (Charlie's Angels, Starsky and Hutch, The A Team), cartoons. Wildlife programmes, discussions and political debates were always turned over and ignored. This meant that the main private stations owned by Berlusconi (see Chapter Ten) were watched far more than the state network by the *strati popolari.*

On occasions the television was watched with great avidity and complete concentration. This was the case with a limited range of programmes. Among the *stati popolari* these consisted of the main evening news (among adults); football matches - particularly internationals; one-off pop or rock concerts (young people); and specific variety shows. In the last case, the most popular during my stay was a programme called 'Drive-in'. Everyone enjoyed this and it became something of a local cult, with young people in the street mimicking its sketches, catch-phrases and oneliners. Like 'San Remo' it was a glitzy production with scantily-clad glamour girls in every scene, zipping about on roller skates. The studio audience were sitting in their cars, hence the name 'Drive-in'. The emphasis was on comedy and the presenters were deliberately 'wacky'. Sketches would be interspersed with guest pop-stars, preferably famous and British or American. The stars of that year's San Remo festival were also invited to appear. One of the favourite slots in the show however, was footage from the Benny Hill Show which always went down well with the audience both in the home and in the studio.

Certain films were sometimes watched. These had usually been seen before many times and people seemed to take great delight in anticipating what was going to happen. One of the most popular of these was a film-dramatization of 'Pinocchio'.

In the above description the *objects* that people consume - clothes, food, household goods or TV programmes - have been emphasised. The main aim has been to show that in associating with particular things, people are positioning themselves in the social world. It is my contention that in most things they position themselves in a very *'modern'* social world (as defined by the core). They seek, more or less explicitly, to situate themselves within a classification that goes far beyond the boundaries of Grotta. Consequently they become integrated into this classification. But not, I would argue, without *costs* to their identity, their sense of self. This will become clearer, by contrast, if we now turn to the *ceto medio* or middle class.

3.2 Il Ceto Medio

Included in this heterogeneous stratum of society are most *professionisti* and *burocrati* - teachers, some doctors, the various 'experts' who were the product of state intervention; most *commercianti* ; most of the new *artigiani* and tradesmen; small business men; many returned emigrants; building contractors and some *trainieri*; those who have used educational qualifications and/or economic success to achieve a standard of living and a lifestyle which is both affluent and, as we will see, regarded by them at least as modern and *'civile'*.

In a sense they form the easiest stratum to define despite their heterogeneity, because they are explicitly engaged in defining themselves. Sandwiched between the *strati popolari* and the elite they are constantly dissociating themselves from the former (and more often than not from their *own* background in this category) and associating themselves, often unsuccessfully, with the latter, or with their betters in the *ceto medio*. They are the class which does not know its place; they are constantly trying not to be what they are, and trying to be what they are not. One woman (a member of the elite by virtue of her father's position as the provincial Director of Education) described them disparagingly as the *classe rampante* - which means both rampant and, interestingly 'climbing', 'creeping'.

The definition of the *ceto medio* as social climbers was a common one. The terms *emergenti* and *arriviste* were frequently used to describe those who were in the process of moving up the social ladder - usually in a disparaging tone. Such assessments were made by people of all classes. Many people of the *classe operaia* complained about the suitability and entitlement of those in the local administration to be their representatives. The complaint would be that they were *emergenti* and not real *nobili* . Real *nobiltà* was in the *blood*, said one old woman holding out her arm and pointing vigorously to her veins; and *they* don't have it, she added.

To an extent time is of the essence in establishing and assessing position in the hierarchy. Those who are well established *tend* to be those who have been claiming membership for longer, while *emergenti* are those who seem to have had a particularly rapid rise to affluence. This all depends on the relationship between who is judging and who is being judged.

How did those of the *ceto medio* define themselves? In a very few cases they *did* identify themselves as middle class. One man, a secondary school teacher often joked

about being a *piccolo borghese* - a *petit bourgeois*. He was engaging in self-parody, pointing to the life he led - owning a nice house and car, having the standard two children, and reading a serious daily newspaper. However what was interesting from my viewpoint about this description was that he was situating himself within a *national* picture, regarding his lifestyle as something enjoyed by a national category of persons forming the *piccola borghesia*. It did not occur to him to refer to himself as a member of the *local ceto medio*. The criteria he used to assess his position, however jokingly, came from beyond the community.

With most people there was *not* this same explicit self-definition as middle class. Rather there was an (attempt at) identification with all that was *civile , colto, educato, evoluto* ('evolved', modern, developed), *raffinato* (refined) - in other words everything that the *strati popolari* are not. This will have been readily deduced from the previous section, which was, in many ways, as much about the *ceto medio* as it was about workers and peasants. Thus this group tend to identify less with other people than with a *lifestyle* - represented negatively in the *strati popolari*.

It is not only in the mirror of other local strata that any one stratum seeks to identify itself, but also in the mirror of core representations and images. Hence if we look at the *content* of what this stratum sees as constituting a life of *civiltà, raffinattezza, coltura, modernità,* etc it can be seen that they are positioning themselves within the core classification of backwardness and modernity.

For the *ceto medio* the field of education is the most important site for the acquisition of modernity. However the *way* in which this is so varies according to the particular history of the family and its existing position in the hierarchy. For many *emergenti* education is the means by which their children gain qualifications and hence access to *un posto* or *un professione* . Access, in other words to the most stable and secure source of economic well-being. It may also mean the second and decisive phase of their transformation to *civile* status; the shaking off of backwardness; or as one local woman put it describing the rise of a family of lorry drivers: *"il riscatto*[4] *sociale dopo quello economico"* - "the social reward after the economic one".

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[4]N.b. the meaning of *riscatto / riscattare* is to *redeem*, usually in a monetary sense - thus *economic* investment is converted into *social* capital. This is a very clear statement of priorities and refutes any overly economistic approach.

This involved attempting to get their offspring into more respectable, *civile*, occupations. Thus of the same family she said in a slightly condescending tone:

> *stanno subendo la loro brava evoluzione e già, grazie alla DC, i loro nipoti hanno ottenuto spinte per lavorare nelle banche o per superare più facilmente i concorsi.*
>
> they are undergoing their own upward development and already, thanks to DC, their nephews have received a push to get work in the bank or to pass *concorsi* more easily.

As those who actually go through the education system, especially those who go to university, discover, there is a lot more to education and schooling than greater access to economic resources or even social prestige.

School and university emphasise the individual and his/her personal development and freedom and encourage the idea of education for its own sake. To whatever extent these ideals are realised they are certainly taken on as ideals by many people, particularly the young - and particularly if they go further afield than Naples to university, as many do. Education also encourages a certain lifestyle the extent of which parents are not necessarily aware when they push their offspring to do well at school and university. It encourages them to be less 'provincial', more 'cosmopolitan'; less 'closed', more 'open'. This all involves a whole way of being that includes values and attitudes as well as tastes in consumption and, getting down to an even more physical level, tastes in food, a way of eating, a way of standing and walking, a way of speaking.

Among the more well-established fractions of the *ceto medio* (who are often distinguished from *emergenti* precisely by the fact that they themselves have had a higher education) *and* among the offspring of *emergenti* who are going through the education system, there is a practical, if not explicit, awareness of all of this. Because of their personal history *emergenti* are not able to transmit to their offspring the attitudes and dispositions encouraged by school and university.

This is demonstrated by the way in which offspring sometimes have to teach their parents how to behave - ridiculing their rough manners, their misuse of Italian (particularly when they are trying to use it properly), pointing out their old fashioned ways or laughing at their misunderstanding of various aspects of modern culture. The 'Guy Fawkes' example (see Chapter Six above) was in this category . In another case, the father was frequently picked up by his children and laughed at for cultural blunders. Depending upon his mood he would tell them to shut up or simply shrug his shoulders and

look embarrassed. There was however no great conflict. He accepted the legitimacy of the 'correct' view.

In the same family, the eldest son, who was eighteen, was sent every week to nearby Benevento for extra private lessons with an ex-teacher who was now high up in the provincial education department. The aim was to maximise his chances of going to university either by cramming or through the influence of his tutor who would, they hoped, ease his passage through exams. However there was so much urgency about the whole operation that a definite insecurity and uncertainty was revealed together with an unfamiliarity with a more 'enlightened' way of educating one's children. This was commented upon by other people who said that the boy's mother wanted to be better than everyone but that the extent she went to was *esaggerato* and unfair on her children.

Having themselves gone through university the more established families of the *ceto medio* did not encounter such problems. Their inculcation of values in the home tended to reinforce what was learned at school and university. This was even more so when one or both parents were teachers. There was an *assumption*, a *confidence* that their children would do well at school and a quiet satisfaction when this was the case. Children could go to their parents to get help with homework. If it was likely that the child would have to stand up and present an answer in class, he or she would do this in front of one of his or her parents the previous day.

Moving up the internal hierarchy of the *ceto medio* the emphasis on speaking correct Italian increases but simultaneously the *need* to emphasise it decreases. For the more well-established sections, speaking Italian comes more naturally (although they are generally also very familiar with dialect). As a result there is not the constant need to pick children up for mistakes or for 'lapsing' into dialect. There was also a noticeable increase in the use of the more correct subjunctive forms and a greater emphasis on the importance of English. Few learned to speak English well at all other than the emigrants who had been brought up in Britain or America. Many of the latter were from poor/ lower class backgrounds and did not see their knowledge of the language as a usable skill or qualification in the market for jobs and in the development of a cultured lifestyle. However, to whatever extent they actually learned the language, this is precisely how the *ceto medio* viewed English. It was a *'strumento di aggiornamento'* - a means of keeping up to date, and of communicating in the wider world.

Although the *ceto medio* frequently used dialect, they did so without what they described as the 'vulgarity' of the *strati popolari*. Children were reprimanded for

returning from school with certain phrases or expressions that *"non si dice"* - "one doesn't say". In the presence of people they wished to impress, normal speech would be modified. Thus, a mother, in the presence of some relatives from Rome of higher social standing, reprimanded her son not with the usual *"fa' te li cazzi tuoie"* but by saying *"Fa' te gli affari tuoi"* - in other words, "mind your own business" instead of "keep your fuckin' nose out".

Later the son entertained everyone with amusing phrases in dialect. For both families there was a certain standing back, a distancing from dialect. Although he was quite comfortable speaking dialect and did so daily, the son was able to laugh at it as something provincial and uncouth, thus demonstrating his familiarity with more refined speech. This kind of distancing was common among the *ceto medio* who, when I explained what I was doing rarely told me about their own lives but always about the peasants or *gente tradizionale* of this or that town or area. Sometimes this was just a matter of what they wore, or 'still' wore as people put it, thus placing them in the past. Other times I was given sophisticated sociological analyses of their situation.

One man, a lawyer and a prominent member of the Communist Party at provincial level heard that I had been invited to a peasant family's house for the annual killing of the pig. He was himself from a peasant background. Listen to their talk, he told me, and you will discover that their main concerns are not with religious or spiritual matters but with economics, with earning a living. We then went on to discuss the relative merits of participant observation and formal interviews in which he noted that the latter had to be used with great care because the situation was artificial and the wording of questions together with the relationship between interviewer and interviewee tended to prejudice the answers to questions. I mention this not through any condescending surprise that this 'provincial yuppie' was able to engage in such a conversation but rather simply to demonstrate further the distance of many people of this stratum from 'tradition' and their familiarity with 'modernity' - a familiarity that is not apparent in other ethnographies of the region. Generally speaking, among the well-established sections of the *ceto medio* there was less of a tendency to denigrate the peasantry. Rather, distancing themselves even more, they would *analyse* them, affirming their own position as members of educated middle class, national society.

Just as for the *strati popolari*, we also find distinguishing characteristics in the consumption patterns of the *ceto medio*. Like the *strati popolari*, the *classe abbiente*[5] put a great emphasis on food, talking about it and eating a great deal also. At least on an everyday basis their practices and attitudes with respect to food are roughly similar too, although there are certain important differences.

Firstly, although they too have annual supplies of food and preserves - tomatoes, peppers, oil, wine, etc. they tended not to prepare their own and instead obtained all of these goods from friends or relatives in the *campagna*. There was a greater tendency for the 'friends' in the *campagna* to be, perhaps, the parents of children they taught, or their patients, or their clients in legal dealings. Moreover the supplies of food and wine were frequently also gifts or heavily discounted.

Secondly, conversations about food were less matter-of-fact, more self-reflexive. There was a greater tendency to point out that such and such a dish or item of food was *'tradizionale '* or *'Grottese'* and indeed to take pleasure in these aspects while eating. There was a greater self-consciousness about the status of certain foods, particularly in relation to tradition.

The children of such families are less amenable to traditional foods and tend, like young people of other strata, to have a greater preference for convenience foods or at least for the national basics - pizza and pasta. They tend *not* to put chilli (*il forte* - strength) on their food, turn their nose up at for example *ciammarrucchieli* (snails), or liver; will eat lamb or beef sooner than rabbit and drink only water or *aranciata* (orangeade) rather than alcoholic beverages. If they do drink the latter then they will take beer rather than wine. They thus tend to reject local convention in eating.

Thirdly there are a number of significant exceptions to the rule that traditional food is preferred. Several women expressed a positive dislike of local foods and more particularly of cooking in general. They tended to do most of their shopping at the supermarket and prepared meals for their family quickly or let a relative, usually their mother or mother-in-law, take over. They were frowned upon and considered as poor mothers although this did not seem to bother them since they regarded the traditional emphasis on food and cooking as *arretrato* and *esaggerato*. They definitely considered themselves to be more *colto*, more progressive. These women came from well-established

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[5]Abbiente = well-to-do, wealthy.

families and indeed made some claim to elite status. Other mothers justified the use of non-traditional foods by saying that they are succumbing to their children's demands or that they have no time because of the fact that they work.

Fourthly and finally the difference between the strata comes out most clearly in the food prepared for special occasions - when there are important guests like the priest or the cousins from Rome. Guests were treated with warm hospitality and offered large quantities of basic 'traditional' food and wine - 'traditional' as defined above and talked about in the same way as above. Guests were always given more and served first. My status in this respect changed as my time in Grotta went on and others, thankfully, began to take precedence over me.

But among a substantial number of families, well-established though with tendencies towards further social climbing, there was a particularly striking reaction to special occasions; to the kind of food that should be served and the *way* it should be served and eaten. I will not discuss all the details of the etiquette involved on such occasions. However one of the most unusual things was that the hosts *experimented* with recipes taken from magazines or from the back of packets of pasta and such like. The food was also served with a hitherto unseen or unheard of attention to presentation and form. On one occasion the hostess brought in a variety of dishes on a serving trolley complete with hot-plate to keep certain dishes warm. This created some discussion: surprised approval among the guests and slightly embarrassed and nervous satisfaction from the hostess on the success of her dinner party.

Contrasts with the *strati popolari* emerge once again in looking at the living space of the *ceto medio*. Virtually all those who fall into this stratum live in their own homes, although a few *emergenti* still live in rented accommodation. Many of the *ceto medio* live in the reconstructed and refurbished *palazzi* around the *centro storico* and *il Corso*; others wait for reconstruction funds to come through to rebuild their homes here. However, most live in the new apartments and villas that have sprung up in the newly built-up areas of the town - *Parco Sciarappa, Rione Gelso, Rione Chirico,* etc. (see map ****). These houses are *large*, often providing accommodation for more than one nuclear family. Rooms are spacious and frequently floored with marble. Most have three bedrooms or more, a kitchen and bathroom, a second toilet/washroom and a *salotto* or living room.

Although a contrast with the typical *casa popolare* can be readily seen from these few details, it is when we consider the furnishings and fittings of these houses that

differences really become apparent. In one house the kitchen was equipped with a cooker and a dishwasher and fitted units; the bathroom had a large coloured bath and scallop-shaped sink. There was another small water closet with a toilet, sink and shower as well as an automatic washing machine and tumble dryer. The *camera matrimoniale* (matrimonial room) was the larger bedroom with a 'normal' double bed (not just two single ones drawn together and no wool mattress here), and a huge mahogany fitted wardrobe.

The two children's bedrooms were more sparsely furnished but well-furnished nevertheless *and each with a television.* The *salotto* or lounge was the largest room of all. It could be divided into two sections by sliding wooden panels into 'living' and 'dining' areas, and panels also separated it from the hall. In the dining area, there was a grand piano, an expensive colour TV, a stacked stereo system, a white leather sofa and armchairs, a long low glass topped coffee table with a marble chessboard, a selection of large green plants, and a number of paintings by a local artist. The dining area, which was rarely used as such unless important guests were coming, had the walls lined with cabinets filled with fine china and crystal glasses. Then all down the wide hallway there were fitted cupboards finished with teak. The only religious icon was a crucifix above the parent's bed. There were various *soprammobili* - ornaments, vases sometimes containing flowers, elegant ashtrays, statuettes. These were often gifts or *bomboniere* from a wedding or christening and when received remark was always made on their quality.

The house was centrally heated and had radiators in every room. Finally in this particular instance the family also owned the *mansarda* or attic of the apartment block in which they lived. This was used mainly as a study and private library by the husband, a secondary school teacher and one of several local historians. As well as books, old newspapers, a typewriter, etc. he had a glass museum-type cabinet with a number of 'exhibits' - pieces of ancient pottery, coins, etc. Here also, a section was partitioned off for storage of the annual supplies of wine, oil and preserves.

Another noticeable difference among most of the *ceto medio* who had homes of this kind, was that not all the furniture and fittings were wedding gifts, whereas this tended to be the case with the *strati popolari.* Instead families such as these were able to buy items of furniture and household appliances for themselves much more frequently. Usually they chose to go to stores outwith Grotta for such items.

For the well-established sections of the *ceto medio,* possession of these goods was taken-for-granted, habitual, 'natural'. No self-conscious attention (which might betray an unfamiliarity or cultural incompetence) was drawn to anything (other than the 'hostess

trolley' mentioned above). For this reason it is difficult to judge peoples' explicit or positive assessments of their own choices. Nevertheless, consumption need not be conspicuous in order to be symbolic and it can still be inferred that the criteria they use in making these choices are criteria that entail an association with symbols of modernity - criteria like *civiltà, coltura, raffinatezza, finezza*[6]. This is of course backed up by the negative judgement of those who do not possess such symbols who, as we have seen, are the opposite of all these qualities - vulgar, backward, etc., (although notably never 'dishonourable').

In dress the same kind of contrasts emerge. As mentioned the families of the *piccola borghesia* are rarely seen at the Monday market buying clothes from the stalls. Instead they go to the expensive clothes shops along *Il Corso* and elsewhere in the town or to similar shops in other towns like Ariano, Mirabella and sometimes, the provincial capital, Avellino. On special occasions they may even go to Rome (for example, for a wedding or first communion dress). Jerseys will be woollen, suits and jackets well-tailored and cut and always lined.

Younger people tend to buy fashion clothing, usually more or less similar to that available at the market but of better quality. Bright colours, sports wear (Adidas, Lacoste), chunky shoes and boots (Timberland), Fiorucci jeans, Benetton sweatshirts and jerseys. It is important to have clothing that displays the *marca* of the designer.

Older people tend more towards clothes which are *discreto* (discrete), which show that they are *persone serie* or *colte* - cultivated, serious persons. *Stile inglese* - English style, which implies in a word all the qualities of 'the cultured person', was popular while I was in Grotta - and indeed was a prominent feature of shop windows in Naples and Rome and in magazine advertising - as were all the qualities described above - sophistication, refinement, etc.

Seasonal changes in dress are marked because of the climate and perhaps even more so among the *ceto medio* . For older men winter's dark wool suit and camel coat are replaced by light blue and cream linen suits. For women and young people, ski-jackets and moon boots were not uncommon. Many women also wore fur coats in winter. Moreover, particularly with the young, many of these items are bought *each year*, rather than pulled out of the wardrobe from previous years.

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[6] *finezza* = refinement, delicacy, subtlety

When someone, especially a young person, buys a new item it is commented upon and inspected by his/her peers. Sometimes they are accused of showing off, particularly if the critic was convinced that the person had ideas above his/her station. One girl was fiercely critical of her cousin who insisted on hanging out with the son of a rich *commerciante* and trying to imitate his clothing and style. On one occasion a woman insisted on showing me in public several items of clothing she had just bought for her teenage son in his presence. Each item was described in terms of its good quality, the fact that it was fashionable and its price. She emphasised how it was all very expensive but she did not want her son to go around looking like a vagabond or a *cafone*. In making such a public display however she tended to show up the fact that she was an *emergente*. Indeed this was confirmed by other people's opinion of her in general:

> *Non è cattiva, ma un po' pazza. Vuole far vedere a tutti che è superiore. Ma lo fa in un modo stupido - fa un grande rumore.*
>
> She's not a bad person, but a little daft. She wants to show everyone that she's superior. But she does it in a stupid way. She makes a lot of noise.

Jewellery, hairstyles, bags and other accessories are also signs of relative modernity, sophistication or *raffinatezza*. Sunglasses pushed back onto the forehead, with a cord attached - always Ray Ban or some other famous designer. One woman, a communist, declared proudly that her sunglasses had been designed by some famous *left-wing* designer as if to prove that they were ideologically sound. It was not clear however in what way her sunglasses contributed to the socialist revolution in Italy. They seemed, along with her fur coat, simply to establish her position as a member of one of the most well-established families of the *ceto medio*. Again however, we can see this as an example of positioning not only within the local hierarchy but in the wider national sphere.

Another important category of 'accessories' for public presentation and display, particularly for the *ceto medio*, are motor vehicles. The *strati popolari* attach just as much significance to these signs of modernity but are less often in a position to use them. Cars, motorbikes and mopeds today form an integral part of the evening *passeggiata*, particularly for the young. Once again there is a hierarchy of style and sophistication according to age, sex and social position. A trajectory can be drawn of the vehicles that are likely to be possessed by an individual in a particular social position as he or she gets older.

Among the lower classes a boy of fifteen can expect perhaps to own or have the use of a well-used moped, handed down from an elder brother. A boy of the same age of the *ceto medio* is more likely to have a brand new motorbike. If there is a younger brother in the family he receive his own motorbike when he gets older, rather than his brother's hand-me-down. Girls of the *ceto medio* of this age will not be given bikes but scooters. Usually they are slightly older before such a gift will be made.

And so it goes on. At eighteen the same boy received a brand new Renault 5 for his birthday, while his counterpart in the *strati popolari* was then driving his brother or father's Fiat Cinquecento.

Large motorbikes, over 500cc were relatively rarely found but if they appeared would cause a stir. Italy discourages cheap Japanese imports to protect its own bike industry and so they are extremely expensive when they are found. It was noticeable then, (particularly for me, for whom motorbikes symbolise a sub-cultural style), that sitting astride any larger motorbikes would be extremely well-dressed young men in expensive suits, stylish haircuts, designer sunglasses, etc.

Motorbikes and cars unequivocally symbolise modernity. They are the *polar opposite* of the stereotypical mode of transport of the southern *cafone - il somaro* - the ass. This is particularly so of the motorbike. It epitomises and embodies speed and technological excellence in its sound, its curves and lines. In all of this it points towards the future. And just as the peasant, as represented in the stereotypes, himself embodies the qualities associated with his animal (slowness, drudgery, etc) so by appropriating the motorbike, the owner (or even he who simply appreciates it) takes on its qualities. The motorbike cannot symbolise just what its owner chooses to make it symbolise, since it already carries meanings. In appropriating the object the owner also appropriates its modernity but at the same time is also appropriated *by* or co-opted to modernity.

In keeping with their generally high level of education - most having at least enrolled at university at some point, even if they did not finish a degree - the *ceto medio* are the most frequent newspaper readers. This is particularly true of those who consider themselves to be *intelletuali*. The 'core' of this group were a number of professionals, teachers, civil engineers, etc. (mentioned earlier as the first of their background to receive an education). The sons of *artigiani* and occasionally peasants, they describe themselves as followers of Osvaldo Sanini - the *confinato* who was exiled to Grotta during fascism (see Chapter Three).

They take a keen interest in 'issues', from international relations, world peace, racism, to national and local politics and spend a great deal of time discussing these matters in bars and other meeting places like the shops described above. They are critical of those who do not take an interest in such matters and who read only the *Gazzetta dello Sport* or just the sports pages of other newspapers, describing them as *ignoranti*. Often *emergenti* come in for as much criticism in this respect as do the *strati popolari*. A great number also read serious current issues magazines like *Europeo* and *Oggi* and buy series of English language learning publications - usually in the form of a magazine plus cassette tape.

On one occasion a poorly attended, but nevertheless significant *'Dibatito sulla Pace'* (Peace Debate) was held in the Social Centre. It was organised by a number of teachers, students and political activists all from families of the *ceto medio*, and attended by their friends and relations, and such questions were raised as the legitimacy of the presence of American nuclear missiles in the province of Avellino and what should be done to get rid of them.

Some individuals were regular contributors to local and provincial newspapers, writing articles on local history, and political and cultural events.

An interest in Culture with a capital 'C' was also characteristic of the more well-established families of this stratum. Children were taken to museums to see Greek and Roman remains or to the theatre or to schools in Avellino to see plays. Teachers were frequently involved in organising shows for parents and one woman organised a *serata danzante* (a dance evening) in which her primary school children performed, raising money for Band Aid.

The television was put on more selectively by the *ceto medio*. The news was listened to attentively as were a number of other 'serious' programmes. Sport and soap operas were less avidly watched, at least by parents. The television was not left on during meals and children would often be told to stop watching TV and to go and do some school work or practice the piano.

One of the most popular programmes, particularly among this stratum, was an 'alternative' variety show called *'Quelli della Notte'* - 'Night People'. It was hosted by Renzo Arbore, an offbeat writer, television personality and comedian who was thought to be extremely witty and also sometimes controversial. Instead of being filmed in a huge studio with bright lights and glamour girls, it took place in what was nothing more than

someone's living room, crowded with people (the audience and performers) and with a jazz band in one corner. This then provided the setting for a thinly veiled parody of the kind of popular variety show described earlier. Indeed a great many structural similarities could be found: there were regular comedy sketches with regular characters, catch phrases and theme tunes were developed, stars appeared, were interviewed and performed songs and sketches.

Overall it was extremely popular, and once again young people ran through the streets, repeating catch-phrases and singing the theme tunes. However the qualities selected by those of the *ceto medio* as characterising the value of the programme were once again, marks of distinction.

The fact that many sketches were unrehearsed and improvised was particularly appreciated as were the special guests who were drawn from a much more 'cultured' sphere. Many were English and American but they were always personalities who could be described in some way as *intelletuali* - Phil Collins appeared and was interviewed by Renzo Arbore in English - evidence of the latter's prowess as a performer and personality. They also enjoyed the overall parodic intention of the programme. Most of all however, the comedy was appreciated because of its *sottintesi* - its allusions and double meanings, its comic references to national and international figures and events, most of which I did not understand but about which people of this stratum would have long discussions. In other words, the show was characterised by its *subtlety* , a quality to which, as we have seen already the *ceto medio* attach great importance; which is in fact for them, part of their *being*.

It was usually among this class that people would discuss 'artistic' films and works of literature. Film directors would be praised - Fellini, Rosi, Pasolini, Olmi - as much as particular films. Dante and Manzoni would be quoted, Pirandello, Sciascia and Carlo Levi talked about, Hemingway, Dickens, and Dostoyevsky mentioned. In terms of music, people liked a range of classical, pop and rock music, depending upon age. Some Italian singer-songwriters were listened to and talked about just as frequently as British and American stars. With the latter, likes and dislikes were more variable then with the popular taste for Duran Duran. Bob Geldof, Paul McCartney, Pink Floyd, Marillion, the Beatles were more commonly the taste of young people of the *ceto medio*.

In the previous section holidays were not mentioned, being a relatively rare event for most of the *classi disagiati*. However for most of the *ceto medio* , particularly those of the *'borghesia di stato'* - functionaries, teachers and other professionals, the

summer holiday has become a major institution. It is generally accepted and expected that every family will spend at least two weeks of the summer months, if not a whole month, *al mare* (at the seaside) or *nelle montagne* (in the mountains). The busiest period is *Ferragosto* - the August holiday when in fact most Italians, never mind Grottesi, pack their bags and go to the seaside. Offices and shops close down; the schools are closed for three months, as are the universities. The roads fill with traffic; accidents increase; restrictions on the use of congested routes are introduced; the newspapers carry stories of the 'biggest volume of traffic ever'. Grotta did not exactly empty of people and grind to a halt. On the contrary a great many people *arrived* in the town - relatives from other parts of Italy, emigrants from abroad. The main local *feste* (which will be discussed in Chapter Nine) were held and so many choose to remain to take part. However large numbers do head off. Young men of middle class families go off in groups to Bari and catch the ferry to Greece and Yugoslavia; some even spoke of motorcycling across Europe to Norway. The main bulk go to seaside resorts on both Tyrrhennian and Adriatic coasts - Mondragone, north of Naples; Palinuro, Praia al Mare to the South, Manfredonia, north of Bari.

There they join fellow Italians from all over the country in sunbathing, playing beach games, eating in hotels and restaurants. Some stay in hotels, and guest houses; others rent accommodation - chalets or villas in which they can self-cater. Some of the wealthier families have their own second homes at the seaside so that they can come and go as they please throughout the summer period.

In addition, there are groups organised by the Church taking bus loads of adult couples on foreign holidays. This has proved to be extremely popular and people recounted story after story about various events that took place and countries, hotels, people they had experienced. Many families took videos or cine films of their trips brought back souvenirs, particularly from London: plates with the couple's photograph in the centre, T-shirts, ornaments of St Paul's and the Houses of Parliament.

3.3. The local elite

Distinguishing a local elite at Grotta as an objective class is not a straightforward matter. As we have seen the overall process of integration since 1960 has served to blur the distinction between the local elite and the rest and to change the arena in which judgements of class positions are made. Moreover local history showed that even today's 'elite' had ignominious origins. They were themselves at one time *emergenti* and their *civlità* therefore, in relative terms, is ill-gotten. Certainly it makes no sense to

think of them as a 'real' elite, in the sense of an aristocracy. In many respects their practices were much the same as those of *ceto medio*.

In education the loss of their monopoly on educational qualifications meant for them a relative devaluation of these qualifications. One way of maintaining the distinction however was to send their children to more prestigious schools in Avellino and Naples. The son of a civil engineer and a prominent member of the DC, was sent to a prestigious military school in Naples which he described in glowing terms. Emphasising its superiority over run-of-the-mill state schools, it gave him, he said, *"una formazione molto più civile"* - "a much more civilised education". From an early age he and others like him became much more quickly familiar with a modern cosmopolitan environment. This familiarity was very important when he started University giving him a head start in cultural competence over others of lower classes. It also meant that his classmates were a select group from similar backgrounds and from a much wider geographical range. Hence from an early stage he established friendships at a much higher social level than his peers in Grotta. In fact he emphasised the fact that many of his contemporaries at the school were the children of prominent or famous people.

He also had the advantage of owning his own apartment in Naples while at University, and thus did not face the problems of most new students from the provinces. As described by Ryan and confirmed by my own experience, most are 'non-attenders' enrolling for exams sporadically when commitments at home do not interfere and staying in *pensioni* when they came to Naples. Although they might seek to embrace the modern values that University theoretically offers (individuality, freedom from family ties, the pursuit of ideals etc) they have less access to them than the sons and daughters of the elite.

Many of the elite families are in relative decline as a result of the post-war changes and as we saw in Chapter Three, many succeeded in maintaining their position of influence by accommodating themselves to the new party political system - particularly by joining or supporting the Christian Democrats. Such strategies in the political field were combined with economic reconversion strategies. This can be seen today in the involvement of some elite families in the commercial sector, now an unproductive but nevertheless burgeoning and lucrative area of the economy. Their involvement is in noticeably prestige enterprises. One of the most striking examples was the family who opened a branch of the Benetton chain - a far cry from the usual 'ten-a-penny' bar or gift shop.

However, one of the main self-distinguishing characteristics of elite families is their isolation and separation from the rest of the community and from the local sphere in general. They *literally* distinguish themselves by physical separation. They have withdrawn, closed themselves off, from the local sphere. This is evidenced in many areas of their everyday life, and is mirrored in their attitudes, choices and tastes.

They eschew the company of the other strata avoiding occasions of public interaction. Only rarely do they participate in the evening *passeggiata* and if they do it is almost certain to be at election time. This is frequently commented upon critically by people in the town. Simultaneously, members of the elite describe how they find coming to Grotta unpleasant because the people are so chiuso (closed, narrow-minded).

The fact of residence in Avellino or Naples is itself a manifestation of this withdrawal and indeed an affirmation of their more cosmopolitan and civile lifestyle. Not everyone of this strata, however, lives outside Grotta. Nevertheless if we look at the kind of residence(s) they have and their location the same practical distancing effect can be seen. There is a growing tendency among elite families to have large new villas built in the *campagna*. Commonly these are surrounded by a high perimeter fence with barbed wire and a remote-control operated gate and close-curcuit cameras. Sometimes there will even be a second fence and gate such that any visitors have the outside gate shut behind them before they are admitted to the house. Invariably there are large guard dogs outside - Alsatians, Doberman Pinchers, Schnauzers.

In front of the house there is often a carefully maintained *giardino inglese* - English garden. In other words a piece of flat, green lawn that took a lot more effort to keep in good condition than its English equivalent, requiring almost constant sprinkling in the summer. Many people of other classes expressed a desire to have a similar garden and some planned to do so when they had a new house built. It is possible to see in this a refusal of anything to do with agriculture. They turned up their noses at the suggestion of growing the usual *orto* or vegetable garden.

At the back there was usually a swimming pool and/or tennis court and, in some cases, a hut with a wood oven which was used occasionally for making pizzas while entertaining guests. It was largely cosmetic rather than functional however.

Inside such houses the rooms were much more spacious and opulently furnished. One had a spiral wooden staircase descending from the upper floor into the large entrance hall.

In house furnishings as in dress, there was an emphasis on *riservatezza* - reserve, restrained style; on quality and subtlety and a clear condemnation of ostentation. In these things also then, we can see the same withdrawal and separation from the other classes.

The same is true of celebrations and weddings which tended to be quiet family affairs and not the grand displays of the rising *ceto medio*. The presence of influential and prestigious figures was nevertheless regarded as important and some elite families declared their close friendship with prominent national politicians, particularly De Mita (the then [1985] Secretary of the DC) and claimed that he was frequently present at any celebrations they had.

One woman of an elite family described to me her attitude to *bomboniere* , the small wedding gifts described above:

> *Io personalmente sono contraria e non le ho comprate quando mi sono sposata. I'usanza è tipica delle classi medio-basse ... nessun libro o rubrica giornalistica nella stampa femminile consiglia l'uso delle bomboniere.*
>
> Personally I'm against them, and I didn't buy them when I got married. The custom is typical of the lower middle classes ... no book or magazine/column in the female press counsels the use of *bomboniere.*

Her tone was disparaging and dismissive, not just of Grottesi but of all the members of the 'lower-middle classes' *throughout the country* who used *bomboniere.* Her terms of reference were *national.*

I was not familiar enough with the elite families of the town to present as close a description of their sense of place as for the other two strata. One other area in which I did find out some details was in the kind of holidays they took. The son of a doctor and regional politician with the DC, went scuba diving in Tenerife staying in first-class hotels. This was considered by others to be the ultimate in holidays. Another family regularly went cruising in the boat they owned and which was moored at Naples.

Although I have presented less material with respect to this stratum of society than for others, I think it can still be seen that the elite do not just distinguish themselves from other strata but do so in a particular way, according to particular criteria. And again these criteria can be seen to be related to the core classification of modernity and backwardness. In dissociating themselves from the other strata they tend to distance themselves primarily from what they perceive to be backward and to associate

themselves with what they perceive to be modern. What is particularly noticeable is that they have ceased to be the model upon which the practices of the other classes are based. Instead, the latter now, like the elite themselves, situate themselves within a much wider, national and supranational arena.

4. Summary

Images of backwardness and modernity are the 'gossip' of modernity. That is the contention of this chapter, and indeed of the thesis as a whole. In their everyday jockeying for position in the local hierarchy, people appeal to standards which go far beyond the boundaries of the local community. These standards are defined by the core images of backwardness and modernity. Peoples' sense of place is no longer a matter of honour or dishonour but a self-consciousness about how they measure up in relation to the dictates of the core. To reject modernity is to become backward. At the same time, refusal of backwardness does not necessarily mean acceptance as modern. At the lower end of the social scale, the peasants are denigrated not because they are dishonourable but because they are backward, even in their modernity. In their everyday choices - from consumption in dress, food and domestic furnishings and appliances to education and entertainment likes and dislikes - people at all levels of local society attempt to position themselves within a classification of backwardness and modernity the content of which is defined by the core. In their assessments of, and distinction from other social strata in the community people use standards of backwardness and modernity to do so. And in some contexts people by-pass the local arena altogether and situate themselves within stratification groups that go beyond the local level. This is particularly true of the *ceto medio* and the local elite.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Sense of place in the political arena

1. Introduction

At the end of Chapter Three we left behind a political situation in which national political parties finally became established at Grotta. The old guard of *notabili* were ousted from the position of power that they had occupied for decades. They were replaced by an up-and-coming class of professionals and bureaucrats who emerged in the post-war period in the context of increased State intervention in the South and the decline of the importance of land as the principal economic resource. These new political activists were from more heterogeneous backgrounds than their predecessors - many were from artisan and peasant families. In addition they were characterised by their attachment to the main national political parties, particularly the DC. Through their position in the DC they became mediators of State resources. With their new educational qualifications and professional expertise, they were better able to deal with the climate of State intervention which brought with it an increasingly complex bureaucracy.

However, as we saw, the political situation was not encapsulated in the actions of mediator-politicians. At the same time as scope for their 'gate-keeping' activities increased, there was an increase in organised left-wing protest, particularly by the emerging Communist party and the extra-parliamentary organisation, *Lotta Continua.*

In terms of Davis' threefold classification of modes of political representation - class action, patronage and bureaucracy (Davis 1977: 127-160) - there was an expansion and intensification of all three.

In this chapter the aim is to look at the contemporary political scene and at how it has changed and developed since the 1960's. As in the previous two chapters, I will not provide a comprehensive account of the nature of political relations in the town. Accounts by anthropologists and political scientists of the political arena in southern Italy are numerous[1] and it would be a mistake to cover the same ground again. Instead I will attempt to show how people place themselves in political relationships and how this can be related to the process of integration and to images of backwardness and modernity.

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[1]Allum 1973b; Blok 1974a & b; Boissevain 1966; Chubb 1982; Colclough 1969; Graziano 1984; White 1980 to name but a few.

I will begin by providing a basic descriptive account of the local political situation in the 1980's. Then I will look at both people's ideas and actions in the political arena, concentrating on an account of the local elections of 1985, the year in which most of my fieldwork was carried out.

2. The Distribution of Power at Grotta

It was not until the administrative elections of 1980 that the present day configuration of political parties became established at Grotta with five of the main national parties represented: Christian Democrats (DC), Communists (PCI), Socialists (PSI), Social Democrats (PSDI) and the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI). Today there are no longer any independent parties or idiosyncratic regional influences like the Monarchist Party (see Chapter Three above). Seats on the local council in 1985 were divided as follows:

Party	No. of seats	% of vote in 1985 election
DC	8	39
PCI	5	26
PSI	3	15
PSDI	3	15
MSI	1	5

As far as the first three parties are concerned, the figures are about average for the South. In what follows I will concentrate on the two main parties - DC and PCI.

In addition to political parties there are other organisations, in particular unions, which offer political representation to local people. However, none of these is particularly active at Grotta. The Church has an extremely low profile in the town and none of the typical Catholic pressure groups like ACLI - *Associazione Cristiana dei Lavoratori Italiani* (Christian Association of Italian Workers) - are present.

At provincial and regional level, Grotta has had, but no longer has, representatives on the administrative councils. Although it is not the job of either regional or provincial councillors to cater for the needs of individual towns and villages, it

is generally agreed that it is the duty of such councillors to use their power to benefit the town to which they belong, or at least that this is what they will do. Not having someone to look after their interests at this level is regarded as extremely detrimental.

Just as the DC are considered at national level to be the *partito di stato*, so at local level, they tend to hold sway. Their members and representatives are largely drawn from the local elite and the upper sections of the *ceto medio* and it is in their hands that the most significant economic interests of the town are held (see Appendix 3). They aspire to the same values as their *notabili* predecessors, even if in practice their powers are more restricted. They have been in the forefront of local power since the early 1960's and their opponents characterise them as forming an unbroken tradition of self-interested autocrats that goes back much further. The vast majority of the twenty candidates they presented to the electorate in 1985 for the administrative elections were of professional status - doctors, lawyers, civil engineers, architects, teachers- or owners of large-scale (by local standards) commercial enterprises. In addition, many of the principal figures in the local DC were not involved directly in the local political scene at all, but cultivated their political relationships at a wider,provincial or regional level. One of these was a provincial councillor until 1985 when he was persuaded to run for the local leadership at Grotta. The 1980 elections in Grotta saw the DC obtain an absolute majority on the town council. It was widely accepted that this had been a consequence of involvement in the clientelistic distribution of jobs at Fiat. The fact that De Mita himself had been involved in the location of the factory at Grotta, presenting it to the community as the fruit of his personal intervention did much to assist the DC's local representatives.

The main opponents of the DC locally, the Communist Party, were increasing in popularity in the late 1960's and by the mid-1970's they achieved their strongest position yet, with five councillors on the local council. This was still not enough however, to enable them to take power and they were unwilling to ally with any other of the local parties. Their increasing confidence in this period was related to rising unrest among the local population over the prevailing economic conditions. Many people had still not been rehoused after the earthquake of 1962 and demands for employment for the area had not been met in any significant way. Protests and strikes became common throughout the area that had been hit by the earthquake and the PCI took the opportunity to lead these protests. However, by the late 1970's most of this advantage had been lost as a consequence of the arrival of Fiat.

Interestingly the active members and supporters of the PCI can be divided into two groups - one consisting mainly of *contadini* or people from a peasant background, the

other of *borghesi* or people who live in the town. This division has been the cause of splits and disagreements within the party which reflect the opposition discussed in the next chapter between *paese* and *campagna*. The relevance of the split to this chapter will become apparent later.

In terms of electoral candidates in 1985, the PCI, PSI and PSDI had their share of professionals (five out of the twenty PCI candidates were teachers) but also included a more sizeable proportion of peasants, small landowners, workers, functionaries, students and unemployed. The extent of their economic interests is not nearly as pronounced as in the DC, although one or two individuals in the smaller parties were extremely wealthy. For the most part the professional status of those who possessed it was of much more recent acquisition. On average they were also much younger.

Several members of the PCI were also involved in provincial and regional politics. The party's local *capogruppo* was, until the 1985 elections when he withdrew his candidature in favour of local involvement, he was a regional councillor. As a Communist his influence in this arena was limited, given the dominance of the DC. Nevertheless it was regarded as important by Grottesi that their town had, as they saw it, someone on the council to represent their interests.

So much for the distribution of power among the local parties and the characteristics of their members, representatives and supporters. What about actual power that is at their disposal at the local level? As mentioned several of the more prominent members of the DC, also members of the local elite, tended to develop their political relations at a wider level. This is related to the fact, pointed out by many others (e.g. Silverman 1975: 140; Colclough 1969) that the real source of power is located centrally; that virtually all decisions made locally on the disposal of resources have to be ratified by the government appointed Prefect. In addition integration has brought with it many changes that render the local level superfluous - for example appointments to most state posts are made by means of national *concorsi* - exams. Hence the most important positions of influence are further up the ladder than the *amministrazione comunale.* Another consequence of this situation is that many of those employed in key posts locally are not local people and have no stake in involvement in local affairs. Even if they are local, success is not achieved by local actions but by involvement in the national system (cf. Silverman op cit.: 140)

Yet it would be wrong to conclude, with Silverman, that "few real functions remain in the hands of the local council" (ibid). Rather, in the context of Grotta, control of

the *comune* has increased in importance over the years, precisely as a result of increased intervention by the state. In the past the positions of local power were prestigious and involved some lucrative benefits - notably avoidance of taxation (see Chapter Three above). Today however, as a result of state intervention, the spending budgets of *comuni* have increased enormously. This is particularly so in the areas hit by the earthquakes of 1962 and 1980. Grotta alone had a sum of around £4-5 million to distribute for reconstruction and development and it was up to the local administration, within central guidelines, to decide to whom and to what this money went. As a result, competition for position within the administration was fierce.

Before looking more closely at how different groups and individuals acted in this situation, let us look at the different political ideologies present in the community - which do not always fit neatly with the party political divisions.

3. Political ideologies

3.1. Popular cynicism

The most common view of politics and of the ways of power in general expressed by Grottese, when they are not specifically taking up the standpoint of a party or individual that they support, is sceptical and cynical and this applies to both local and national levels. This basic scepticism is in fact, as Colclough points out (1969: 130) recognised in Italian law which has numerous restrictions and procedures relating to conflict of interest in public affairs. Referring to politicians, an old man put it this way:

> *Alla fine dei fatti son tutti uguali. Sono persone che fregano alla gente, sempre fregano.*
>
> At the end of the day, they're all the same. They're people who steal from the people, always stealing.

Involvement in politics according to locals is *always* about private interest, about getting as much as one can for oneself. This *egoismo* was seen as a lamentable state of affairs, but inalterable. Almost everyone had examples of the distribution of resources according to this logic: the councillor who saw to it that 5 of the first *case popolare* to be completed after the 1962 earthquake went to his relatives; the one who made sure his brother won public works contracts from the local council; the earthquake *contributi* for reconstruction that were channelled to relatives and friends of those in power at the town hall; the building licenses that were granted to construction firms for building private

houses despite the land being protected or earmarked in official and legally binding plans for new playing fields for the town; the jobs that were granted through *raccomandazioni.*

The consequence of this hostile and predatory situation was that one had to look out for oneself - *ognuno per i cazzi suoi* (the vulgar but more common form of 'everyone for their own affairs'). The only way then, to defend oneself from the action of the powerful was to join in, adopt the same self-interested approach. Anyone who sought to become involved in local politics was by definition pursuing their own interests rather than those of the 'common good'. If this was not so, if someone was seen to be genuinely honest, they were regarded as *fesso* - foolish, naïve, gullible. One woman described the qualities of her husband who had just been elected to the local council and was now involved in negotiations about position on the executive *giunta.* He was one of the less significant members of the council but according to her, if he did not push to get an assessorship he would be *fesso:*

> *tutti gli altri faranno la stessa cosa. Perchè deve fare il fesso iss'? Lui deve imparare a fare il furbo, a fare imbrogli. Ma mio marito non è capace di fare imbrogli. Se uno dice che dovesse fare il sindaco ... Non sia mai!. E` troppo fesso!*
>
> All the others will do the same thing. Why should he be *fesso*? He has to learn to be cunning, to cheat. But my husband is not capable of cheating. If someone said he should be mayor ... Never! He's too *fesso!*

Another deeply held expectation of most people, whatever their party or ideological allegiance, is that it is necessary to have someone in the political arena using their influence on your behalf, even if they were sceptical about the actual deeds of those who claimed to be so acting. *"Ci vuole il santo prottetore"* - "You need a patron saint" was how one woman put it. However she immediately went on to describe her father's loyalty to the DC and how he had received absolutely nothing in return.

By extension, those involved in provincial or regional politics are expected to benefit the whole town, look after its interests. One DC councillor on the provincial administration was continually berated for having done nothing for Grotta while in this position. Then, when none of the Grottesi candidates was elected to the province or the region in 1985, it was considered to be disastrous for the town. An ex-mayor from another town in the region of Basilicata assessed the situation at Grotta, saying that it was in a poor position now, and blaming one of Grotta's candidates for splitting the Grottese vote. In his town they benefited from the presence of a regional councillor *"chi vuole bene al nostro paese"* - "who is fond of our town". At a higher level, Ciriaco De Mita, who in 1988

was Prime Minister, is seen as the benefactor of the whole of Avellino province and as being responsible for the 'gift' of the Fiat factory.

The kind of rewards that people expect for their votes vary according to context. In the individual cases of ordinary workers and peasants, assistance with minor everyday matters - help with the papers for buying a house, the granting of a plot in the cemetery, the cutting of bureaucratic or legal corners in the payment of some tax or obtaining a subsidy for something. In some cases the service is something that individuals are anyway entitled to, but their *santo prottetore* succeeds in presenting it to them as a favour, since he can always by-pass the inertia of bureaucracy (which he has in fact cultivated precisely to put himself in this position). In other cases, the individual may not be entitled to the service at all, but is assisted in bending the rules. For the town as a whole, people expect jobs, houses, major public works - roads, drainage systems, irrigation schemes, a railway station.

How then does this popular view of power fit with the ideologies expressed by political parties at Grotta, particularly the PCI and DC? Let us look first at the Communists.

3.2. Left-wing ideology

Those who are active in or profess support for the PCI generally seem to have a set of thought-out political views to accompany their allegiance, although these vary from individual to individual. They tend to refer to each other as *compagno* - comrade, and adopt a number of symbols through which to display their allegiance. One man called his son Stefano Lenin Rossetti. They have set ideas both on local affairs and wider national and international issues. Indeed frequently their views on local affairs are expressed in terms of the more general issues.

Discussions, debates and arguments, both informal and formal, were common among Communist sympathisers. The basic ills of local and national society were caused by clientelism and the DC. The Christian Democrats were not just corrupt, they were anti-democratic. It was not just a case of dishonest men corrupting the system but of a completely ruined system which made men corrupt. In addition, the DC was not a party with a clear political ideology that could be translated into policy but rather a set of individuals each with his own private interests. All that they did was come to agreements on the *spartizione del bottino* - the division of the spoils. DC views, as

represented by the PCI, are thus in keeping with the standard accounts of the spoils system that characterises Italian politics, described for example by Tarrow (1966).

The best way to get rid of this system was to work together - concerted class action. Those in power should be held to account for their actions. Workers and peasants were the victims of their actions and should unite to make demands through strikes, protests, demonstrations etc. At the same time most recognised that due to the *mentalità arretrata* of the people, this was unlikely to happen. Hence there was no contradiction in holding these abstract political views together with the popular cynicism described above. Indeed some described this combination by referring to Lenin and an 'end justifies means' approach to obtaining power.

They viewed with scorn the traditional deferential relationship between *notabili* and peasants. The so-called 'favours' that they offered in everyday life were more often than not an individual's democratic rights. Individual members of the DC, and of other parties were despised if they were known to act in a clientelistic way. De Mita was singled out for particularly vituperative criticisms. One well-known story is of the Communist bar owner who pulled down the shutters of his bar on *il Corso* as if at a funeral during a procession attended by De Mita to herald the arrival of the Fiat factory.

As mentioned, views were varied. Several active members of the party, notably all *chianiaiuoli* - i.e. people from an area in the campagna known as *i piani* or in dialect *i chiani* - were regarded as *stalinisti* - hardliners who were anti-Church and who were in favour of links with a hardline USSR and eventually a one-party state in Italy. One man who had returned to Grotta for the summer described himself as part of a Marxist-Leninist group in Modena. He had been involved in Lotta Continua during the 1960's and early '70's and described other Grottese who had also been involved but were now members of the PCI, as traitors and defectors.

Others took the charismatic national leader of the party until 1983, Enrico Berlinguer, as their reference point and were much more in favour of an accord between parties. They had supported the *compromesso storico* - the historic compromise - that had been reached between the PCI and DC in the mid-70's. The hardliners saw the integrity of the party in danger at any question of compromise or alliance. The corruption of the DC was contagious. Others saw the compromise between the party and the Church as important. Marx after all, was only one philosopher among many and should not be rigidly followed.

Many young people were supporters of the local Communists and related this to their present social condition - unemployed and with very little hope of things changing. One man described himself as *"comunista proprio di cuore"* - in other words a Communist really deep down, precisely because he was unemployed yet had qualifications, his parents were poor and successive Christian Democrat governments had done nothing to assist him or people like him. In this situation, he said, it was not logical to be anything other than a Communist - *"è ovvio, il comunismo è proprio la mia ideologia"* - "Its obvious, communism is definitely my ideology".

Most of these people were willing to voice their opinion on a wide range of issues. These included South Africa, racism, the position of women in society. The marxist-leninist mentioned above spoke to me about the British miner's strike of 1984-5. What was required to help them win their cause in his view was concerted pan-European action by miners and other workers. On women's day, some local members of the party organised a debate on women in the *piazza* where they discussed the inequalities that still existed in the Italian system with respect to divorce, abortion, female labour, the family.

3.3. Right-wing ideology

Those who are members of the DC or who support it through voting tend not to have an explicit set of political ideas worked out. Rather they tend to eschew the whole idea of politics and politicians.

> *Io voto per lui perchè lo stimo . E` una brava persona. Non mi interessa la politica.*
> I vote for him because I admire him. He's a good person. I'm not interested in politics.

For many the only thing that concerned them were the 'rules of *amicizia*' according to which favours were exchanged reciprocally. If someone helps you out it is your duty to return the favour. This kind of attitude is actively encouraged by the DC. Their annual festival held in the provincial capitals and attended by important members of the party - in the case of Avellino, by De Mita - is called *la festa dell'amicizia* - the festival of friendship.

However, this kind of attitude is regarded as somewhat backward and so, while encouraging the idea of friendship, the DC are anxious to divest this of the connotations of patronage and clientelism. In 1985 De Mita, of all people, was publically urging the DC to develop a clearer political line.

Yet while they claim to eschew any explicit political beliefs or allegiance to any political party, many (*de facto*) supporters of the DC and of the other minor parties clearly had political opinions. One man, a painter and decorator, expressed anger at the introduction of a new law introducing increased protection for workers from being laid off. Managers should be able to lay off workers whenever they liked, he said. This meant that people would work harder to keep what they had.

Many others, particularly *emergenti*, described how hard they had worked for what they had achieved - a house, a car, everything their children needed. This was to be contrasted with the unemployed of the town who spent most of their days *in mezz'alla strada* - on the streets. People without work were to be regarded as lazy.

Others were more extreme, particularly those who professed support for the neo-fascist MSI. However, it should be stressed that none were violent or resembled in any way the typical supporters of, for example, the British National Party. They were predominantly older men who felt some nostalgia for the days of Mussolini, and they lamented the state of society today: the lack of respect of the young, drugs, vandalism, prostitution etc. They condemned the corruption and disorganisation of Italian bureaucracy at both local and national levels, and were equally critical of both Christian Democrats and Communists. They referred back to the *ordine* (order) that was present during Fascism and the sense of pride that Mussolini inspired. Their solutions to the problems they identified were couched in terms of purging, *mettendo al fuoco* - putting to the torch, all the undesirable aspects of society, cleaning up the streets. The fact that they vote for such a minority party is sufficient proof to their supporters that they are free from the self-interest that characterises the calculated vote of other people.

4. Political action: the local elections of 1985

4.1 Introduction

Political activity in Grotta during 1985, was dominated by the local elections which saw, for the first time, the formation of a left-wing administration with a Communist mayor. Electioneering began in February, the elections were in May, it took until mid-August for an agreement to be reached on the precise formation of the council and for the rest of the year the attention of everyone was focussed on the actions of the new council. By looking at each of these stages we can see how and to what extent political ideology was translated into action. We will see in much of what follows that the rules which guide people's political actions are not normally those laid down by the (party)

political ideology to which they profess to adhere. Rather the more well established codes of friendship and kinship emerge as more important. In addition, we will see that those who seek to eschew this way of doing things are not entirely at liberty to do so.

4.2. Electioneering

One of the first tasks in preparing for local elections is the drawing up of a list of candidates to compete for votes. This is a delicate and crucial operation, with a great many pitfalls. Parties obviously want to field candidates who will gather the maximum possible number of votes. However, they must also deal with internal disputes about who is to stand, who is to be dropped, who is to be *capolista*. It is common knowledge that the DC are always last to submit their list (on this occasion they did so only hours before the official deadline) because the extent of internal bickering is so great. This in turn is said to be due to the fact that they have so many personal interests in being elected to the council.

In fact, on this occasion the bickering had gone beyond the arena of local self-interest as the regional federation of the DC imposed a decision on who was to be the local *capolista*. In doing so they replaced the man who had been *sindaco* for much of the past ten years with a candidate who was in agreement with them, but who was less popular locally.

Each party eventually produced a list of twenty candidates, one for each place on the council (the MSI could only muster seventeen however). In total then, there were 97 candidates for twenty seats. With a voting population of approximately 5000 people, the average number of votes required per candidate is only 250. However, with 97 candidates competing for this target and some likely from the outset to obtain many more, the competition is fierce.

One of the most common tactics in putting together a party list is to attempt to field candidates who will split the vote of rivals. Intimately and practically aware of the most common motivations for voting - kinship and friendship - parties will often try to persuade the relative of a candidate in a rival list, to join their list. When I pointed out to one of the local Communists that this kind of manoeuvering was going on in the formation of the PCI list, taking advantage of the fact that people will always vote first for a relative or for someone of influence- i.e. someone who will or could, at least in theory, look after their interests - when he himself rejected this principal as *arretrato*, he simply said to me: *"sapiamo fare la lista pure noi"* - "we know how to make a list too".

As a candidate, the theory and practice of actually getting the electorate to vote for you tends to vary. One of the candidates for the council in the PSDI list was sitting talking to his wife and her sister about the coming elections. Although they were still four months away, parties had already begun to form their lists of candidates and to campaign for votes. The sister was an active member of the local PCI and about 24 years old. The wife did not profess any particular allegiance but rather had a well thought-out political strategy for getting her husband as many votes as possible. Her husband was not a person of any great local influence; he was not one of those *'più in vista'* - 'most in view' in the town. But as an employee of the Post Office, *she* had made many friends with the customers - particularly old peasant women who came in to collect their pensions. Because she did them this service, they would be ideal people to canvas, if only she could remember where they all lived.

However, her husband was not of the same mind. That kind of politicking was in his view *incivile.* He intended to ask anyone to vote for him, regardless of their relationship to him. If they agreed with what he said and what his party stood for, they should vote for him, and not because they owed him some favour or wanted something from him personally. His wife raised her eyebrows and gave a long and ironic *"sì!"*, while her sister agreed with the husband, saying that voting in a clientelistic way was backward and unjust.

Several weeks passed and with the elections getting closer and the hunt for votes keener, our candidate had reassessed his position and was to be seen touring the countryside with his wife looking for the peasant women who came into the post office. In fact, although she could not have denied them their pensions, she was in a position in which she could conceivably make things difficult for them and so was able to present her service as a favour. Whether this was the case or not, the majority of people in the town interpreted such actions in this way anyway. Hence, even where a candidate is committed to what he himself sees as a more civilised and modern form of political action than that normally practised locally, here he is not entirely at liberty to put it into action.

One of the most characteristic features of the election campaign were the *comizi* or public meetings at which candidates, particularly the leading ones, spoke to the public from a platform in the *piazza.* Colclough (1969: 145) describes how he was told by local people not to pay much attention to *comizi* , how they did not affect the way people voted, which was based not on ideology expressed from the platform, but, as we have described here, on personal connections and favours. However, I would suggest that they are an

extremely important part of local political culture. Speakers receive a wide audience, and for the provincial and regional candidates, supporters are drafted in form other towns to cheer on their candidate. The level of debate and the quality of rhetoric is extremely high. Public speaking is cultivated as an art and, particularly among the PCI speakers involves a great deal of preparation and gathering of data. One socialist candidate was ridiculed for, among other things, the fact that he read his speech from a piece of paper and even with this aid, failed to speak correct Italian throughout. As we will see, his actions were singled out for criticism on other occasions.

The *comizi* were extremely varied. Each party had an evening at which candidates spoke, while individuals also chose to speak on other nights prior to the elections. The majority of the speeches involved personal attacks on rivals and in fact some *comizi* were held specifically to make such attacks. One DC candidate attempted to make specific accusations against a member of the PSDI who was regarded locally as a *furbacchione* - an extremely cunning person. He was reputed to have repeatedly been involved in procuring for his brother, and taking a cut from, contracts for public works. This sparked off a series of rebuttals and counter-accusations. Other speeches, particularly by PCI candidates did not involve reference to the local situation at all, but spoke of national and international issues. The PSI were singled out for ridicule by their opponents and by many onlookers. They were the only ones who actually read their speeches from paper. This was sufficient cause for inducing derision. However, in addition the content of the speeches of one candidate in particular was extremely poor and stilted and often grammatically incorrect. In this he showed himself to be *incivle* and *ignorante* - qualities unbecoming of someone acting in this arena.

The DC were criticised particularly for internal bickering which had resulted in their administration achieving little. This seemed to be a view that was accepted widely in the community and it was expected that they would do badly in the elections. At the main DC *comizio* notables involved in politics at national level were drafted in to urge people to vote for the DC. It was carefully noted that the outgoing *sindaco* and the candidate proposed (or imposed) by the regional federation of the party were not, at any time in the campaign, present on the same platform.

The PCI attempted a different method in an effort to demonstrate their opposition to clientelism. They held a public debate at which all their candidates were present. This was explained as a demonstration of their solidarity in opposition to the fragmented nature of the DC with its fragile coalition of private interests. It was also intended to show that the PCI wished to institute a new relationship between those in

power and the electorate - based not on clientelism but on rights and duties and democratic public participation. All were invited to participate in the debate although in the end the 'brief' speeches by the leading PCI candidates left very little time for contributions from the public.

On the last evening of the campaign there were *comizi* from early evening until midnight when all canvassing had to stop by law for twenty-four hours. All parties had candidates speaking. The MSI held theirs in a completely different *piazza* from the back of a truck. Only one speech was given and the rest of the time was spent playing military music from Fascism and tapes of speeches by Mussolini. Almost all speakers spoke of the ills of clientelism, telling people, for example, to vote for the issues and for people who wanted to solve the problems of the town instead of dealing in favours, bribes and intimidation.

Most people were waiting to hear the speech of the outgoing *sindaco*. This was to be his first public appearance during the whole campaign. As well as criticising his opponents and reading out a list of all the achievements of his administration over the past five years, he sought to play on the campanilistic emotions of the people. He emphasised the importance of Grotta as a natural centre of attraction for other towns and claimed that other towns were trying to cut Grotta out of the picture in the ongoing development of the area - this kind of discourse will be looked at more closely in the next chapter. While accepting that what was said from this platform was of less significance than the practical business of offering and doing favours, cultivating friendships and (re)establishing kinship relations, I would suggest that this kind of talk had some influence on people's support for the ex-*sindaco*. Significantly, he spoke almost until midnight, leaving only a few minutes to a DC senator who had been brought in to support the campaign. He completely ignored motions from his fellow candidates to finish up. This was a carefully calculated move since the latter, as a representative of the wider party hierarchy, was backing the other DC candidate.

Another significant feature of the pre-election campaigning was the use of the local television station, Telegrottaminarda. Various candidates appeared from all the parties, however, the way in which they did so is instructive. Those of the PCI used this medium as a means of conveying a message. They introduced themselves, stated their case and then asked people to vote for them. The DC on the other hand, did not speak at all, or what they said was drowned by music. One candidate for the regional administration, who was very influential locally and had been *sindaco* during the 1970's, simply grinned at the camera as Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* played in the background. This action was

further fuel for PCI criticisms of the DC's lack of political culture - they said nothing because they had nothing to say. For the latter however, the purpose of using the television was largely symbolic, testimony to their standing in the community, rather than a means of conveying an explicit political message. This would have been inappropriate, since their method of gathering votes was a personalistic one by which emphasising their influence and ability to distribute favours was more important than discussing issues.

4.2.1. The polling station

The elections were held over two days, Sunday and Monday, and over this period any form of electioneering is banned by law. The Monday is a holiday and many emigrants take advantage of government subsidies for travelling expenses to come and vote in their home town. Those in foreign countries are reimbursed in full to the Italian frontier. The primary school was turned into a polling station, with rooms for each of the 11 electoral sections into which the town's population was divided. Armed soldiers and *carabinieri* paced about both inside and outside the school. They took charge of the voting cards at the end of each day. Inside each section, there was a president, a secretary, four *scrutatori* - scrutineers, and a *rappresentante di lista* - a representative of each party list, to make sure their party was fairly treated. This last role proved to be most important in the counting of votes as disputes over spoiled papers arose. In these situations, the partiality of those who were supposed to be impartial became apparent.

As well as the officials present, there was an unofficial welcoming party at the school gates to greet voters. This consisted of candidates and activists of each of the parties and was the object of much discussion. Several of the more influential DC candidates stood very prominently and strategically, shaking hands with some of the voters as they entered and accepting deferential greetings from others. There were suggestions that some candidates took to issuing threats at this time. This was all clearly last minute electioneering and as such, illegal. The Communists present saw it as their job to keep an eye on things - to make sure voters were not intimidated into voting for a particular candidate. I suggested to a group of Communist that by being there they were doing exactly the same thing, that even if they did not mean to influence people's voting, their presence at the gates would be interpreted in the same way. However, they insisted that the PCI did not have this kind of power. One woman, a teacher of sociology at Modena and the sister of a local PCI activist, said to me that the DC were behaving in the same manner as the traditional *notabili* of the town - the doctor, the chemist, the school master. All they could do was to make sure that this behaviour did not go too far.

Another woman, this time one of the PCI's candidates, claimed to have had an effect on the DC's activities by playing Rossini's *"La Gazza Ladra"* - the Thieving Magpie - at full blast from the balcony of her apartment which overlooked the school. However, I was not present to witness this rather subtle comment on their behaviour. Amongst most people there was further cynicism regarding the motives of candidates who appeared to be friendlier than ever on election day and then lost all interest once in office.

4.2.2. Reasons for voting

As regards voting , the following quote, by a young unemployed man, sums up in many ways, the predominant pattern in the town.

> *Io sono comunista, sì, anzi comunistaccia, però voto per mio fratello - è naturale.*
>
> I'm a Communist, yes, horribly Communist in fact, but I'm going to vote for my brother - naturally

Most people, when it came to the crunch, voted on the basis of kinship or friendship. In this case, the young man was a professed and voluble Communist (though not a supporter of the party, which was too liberal for his liking). Yet he chose to vote for his brother, a candidate with the PSDI. Few people found anything surprising in his action. At the same time, not everyone was agreed that this kind of voting was a good thing. Many supporters of the Communists lamented that this kind of thing happened but said that the *mentalità arretrata* of the people could not be changed overnight. Those who encouraged this within the PCI were the exception rather than the rule, they said. Several others rationalised their own vote in the following manner:

> *Io ho votato per mio cugino ma non perchè è mio cugino. L'ho votato perchè so che è capace, è ben preparato.*
>
> I voted for my cousin, but not because he is my cousin. I voted for him because I know that he is capable, he knows his stuff.

Others admitted with embarrassment that they would *have* to vote for a particular DC candidate, even though they did not agree with the principals of this party, regarding them as backward:

voto per l'ex-sindaco perchè m'ha battezzato-
I'm voting for the ex-mayor because he baptised me

voglio votare per i comunisti, però lui c'ha aiutato con la casa e con il lavoro - devo votare per lui.
I want to vote for the Communists but he has helped us with the house and with work - I have to vote for him.

Vedi, il fratello di mio padre si è candidato con i democristiani - io non posso votare per i comunisti
Look, my father's brother is a candidate with the Christian Democrats - I can't vote for the Communists.

For some people then, the obligation towards family and those who had provided some service, came before their own, often deeply held, political opinions.

4.3. The New Administration

The overall results of the elections at local level were set out in section 2 above. The DC, as expected, lost several seats and their absolute majority, although some had thought that they would lose more than three councillors. The Communists, socialists and social democrats took one of these seats apiece. Immediately, everyone was aware that the seemingly impossible could now become a reality: by forming a coalition, these three parties could form, for the first time in the town's history, *un'amministrazione di sinistra* - a left-wing administration.

In fact it was several months before any administration at all was formed. The three 'left-wing' parties seemed to agree to exclude the DC but the negotiations were long and drawn out, indicating to the electorate that these politicians were not in fact any different from their predecessors - bickering about the division of the spoils of office. It was generally agreed however, that the principle obstacle to a settlement was the PSI which had previously formed an alliance with the DC and were in a position to do so again. *Comizi* continued to be held, with individuals making accusations and counter-accusations as talks broke down - or indeed in order to cause a breakdown.

It emerged that the PSI, particularly its uncultured leader, was trying to force the rest to agree to his appointment as sindaco. The other two parties were agreed that before any decision was taken as to the distribution of the various positions on the *giunta*, a programme of what they were actually going to do when in power should be drawn up and signed. This was in fact a standard method used by the PCI on past occasions when they had agreed to give their support to an administration. On this occasion they were particularly pushing for its adoption since there were other individuals on the coalition

who were regarded as *furbacchioni* and therefore more dangerous than the PSI leader who was causing all the problems on the surface. His actions were regarded as the posturing antics of an uncultured peasant; a *cafone* who was unfamiliar with the correct way of behaving in this context. There were other peasants, or people of peasant background involved in the negotiations, but he was the only one who behaved like one.

Agreement was eventually reached at the beginning of August, more than two months after the elections. The *sindaco* was to be a Communist, but all the six other *assessorati* were to go to the other two parties. This meant that each of the elected councillors of the PSI and PSDI would be a member of the *giunta*. However, what was significant about this new administration from my point of view was not the particular distribution of positions among the individuals involved but rather the nature of the administration as a whole.

The parties had come to an agreement that all decisions would be taken as a group. This was to be a new kind of administration without *egoismo*, without *imbrogli*. For most of those involved, especially those of the PCI, this was a completely genuine attempt to make a break from previous administrations. It was not naïve, since they were aware of the pitfalls and knew that they would not necessarily succeed. One of the Communists on the administration thought that it would last a year if it was lucky, and if in that time they could push through a few of the more important decisions, particularly regarding distribution of earthquake funding and a regulatory plan for the development of the town, he would be happy.

At the PCI summer festival (which will be discussed in full in the next chapter) the party held another public debate at which the new *sindaco* described the *cambio di stile* - the change of style - that was to be the most important feature of the administration. This was to involve a new relationship between *cittadinanza e potere* - people and power, that they saw as underlying the new administration. It was to be a relationship which involved consultation, and of *diritti e doveri* - rights and duties - rather than one of favouritism.

Moreover, it was proposed in one of the first council meetings after the elections to introduce a new system of participation in council meetings. All contributions must from now on be based upon adequate research and documentation. The explicit intention was to force a greater response from the DC who generally said very little in meetings, adopting the demeanour of old style *notabili* who have no need to justify themselves in any way. *"Sono sopramobili"* - "they're ornaments" - the Communists would say; *"siamo*

galantuomini" - "we're gentlemen" the DC would say in response. They walked out of the meeting as one of the PCI councillors read out the proposals.

So how did this *cambio di stile* work in practice, however genuine it was in its intention? As might be expected, it was not entirely successful. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, as in most social action we have described, the particular individuals or groups involved are not always entirely at liberty to define the meaning of their actions. In other words, all the actions of the administration were subject to the interpretations of the electorate and of the opposition. For many people then, the changes being implemented by the *giunta rossa* were merely a *fuoco di paglia* - a straw fire which would quickly burn out. These politicians were just like all the others, they said, they're in it for their own interests.

Indeed, many of the decisions of the *giunta could* quite easily be interpreted in terms of the popular cynicism described above and this is precisely how many did interpret them. This applies, for example, to staff changes at the Town Hall which were introduced as soon as the left coalition took power. It was fruitless to deny favouritism and *vendetta* in these changes. Those who were supporters of the DC inevitably saw themselves as vulnerable and some who were, for example, transferred from one office to another clearly thought they were being picked on.

Secondly, many of the actions of some members of the *giunta*, particularly, but not exclusively, in the case of the socialists, *were* clearly and sometimes blatantly clientelistic. On one occasion the same socialist leader mentioned above was found threatening *commercianti* at the Monday market with loss of their 'patch' at the market if they did not make a contribution to him for the coming *Festone* (see next chapter for a full discussion of this, the town's main summer festival). Later in another meeting of the *consiglio comunale* it was agreed to accept a state loan of £It250 million for completion of the new middle school in the town which had been lying half built for almost ten years. Not content to leave things at that the socialist leader took the opportunity to address the audience, and the cameras of the local television station:

> *Prendo la parola per dare gli auguri ai nostri cittadini per questa grazia finalmente concesso dall'amministrazione.*
>
> I would like to give my best wishes to our population for this grace finally granted by the administration.

One member of the public at least was not content to accept the councillor's taking credit for what he saw as a solely bureaucratic process: "*concesso grazie alla Cassa*

Depositi e Prestiti" - "granted thanks to the State Loan Agency" he shouted to the amusement of the other spectators.

Another aspect of the *cambio di stile* was that all the actions of the administration had to be, or be seen to be, within the bounds of legality in all actions. This put them in a difficult situations, particularly where some members attempted to be very rigid about this. It led to the introduction of a time clock at the town hall to monitor the movements of staff. The explicit aim was increased efficiency. The local interpretation was once again *vendetta.* The same applied to the decision to remove the unofficial, but more or less permanent fruit and vegetable stalls at various points along *il Corso* and the closing down of all shops which did not have an official vending license - a large number. The official line was legality and in the former case, health regulations. However, as far as the victims and most of the public were concerned, they were being picked on. Most people could come up with many reasons why the particular individuals making these decisions would want to harm the particular individuals affected. Tightening up on illegal parking was another deeply unpopular action. On one occasion I was present in the town hall as a stream of motorists came to have the problem sorted out by having a quiet word with someone on the administration. However, they were all sent away disgruntled, being told that *la legge è uguale per tutti* - the law is the same for everyone. Through all of these actions they succeeded, not in developing a new relationship with the public but in fostering the idea that they were no different from any other ~~politicians~~ self-interested politicians.

But the showcase of the new administration was its first public appointment - traditionally classic ground for clientelism. The job made available was for a *geometra comunale* - communal surveyor - and one of the candidates was a DC councillor with a very large following. The administration insisted that the best candidate would be selected and that the committee that made the decision would not be influenced by any *raccommandazioni* from influential people. Nevertheless many of the candidates sought such help.

In the end the DC candidate *was* selected and this was presented by the PCI as a demonstration of how serious they were about instituting a new form of administration. He had been the best candidate and had won the concorso. The commission had not been involved in any *imbrogli* or trading of agreements but had reached a decision according to the lawful bureaucratic procedures. For most ordinary people, including many Communists however, this action was seen as *fesso:*

Perchè non hanno infilato qualche compagno? Son fessi proprio

Why couldn't they have slipped in some comrade? They're really stupid.

said one despairing and confirmed Communist. She considered it a real blunder in realpolitik. Others were not so critical but, using the same system of ideas, managed to find some of the logic of *furbizia* in their action: the newly appointed geometra was married to a woman who had been a Communist until she met her husband. By doing him this favour, they were attempting to get back the votes that they had lost from her and her relatives and also tap the pool that he commanded, which was considerable. The socialists were not at all happy about the decision since one of the other main contenders had been 'their' candidate and threatened on some other pretext, to resign from the administration, putting it into crisis. Finally, some people said that whatever the PCI said, such decisions are made at a higher level, i.e. by *Il prefetto*. The DC had had some assistance from this higher level.

This last interpretation is an important one, whether or not it did in fact apply in this case. The DC continued to show its influence throughout the life of the *giunta rossa*. Telegrams from national politicians arrived laying claim to improvements to local infrastructure:

Destinatario: Dott. Antonio Morelli, Sezione DC, Grottaminarda
Comunicare che consiglio amministrazione Cassa DD. PP. habet approvato mutuo di £462.000.000 per fognature cordialità, Ciriaco De Mita

Addressee: Dr. Antonio Morelli, DC Headquarters, Grottaminarda
Communicate that administrative council of State Loan Agency has approved loan of £It462.000.000 for drains Yours cordially, Ciriaco De Mita.

Telegrams like these no longer, as in the past, claim explicitly that resources have been granted directly as a result of the interest and intervention of the sender (c.f. Davis 1973: 152). Nevertheless the intention and the effect are the same.

5. Summary

It is apparent from this chapter that the tension between backwardness and modernity found in previous chapters, and which will be found in subsequent chapters, is not nearly as apparent in the political arena. Although it is generally accepted that clientelism is, publically, to be condemned; assigned, along with crimes of honour, to the past, in practice the 'rules of *amicizia*' prevail: those who do not put the interest of their own family first are *fesso;* there is no point in voting for someone unless there is at least the potential of getting something out of it; those with influence in the wider arena should be respected; they are the only ones who can do anything for us or our town.

In fact, this should come as no surprise. In politics the South dominates the system in many ways. This can be seen in the success of people like De Mita whose power base was built on the votes of people in the towns of Avellino, and of the mafia in maintaining its stranglehold on the state.

Despite this there are clearly signs of the symbols of modernity in the elections. Canvassing by television, however it is done and with whatever motivations, shows a familiarity with modernity previously unknown. Clearly also, there are many in the community, particularly Communists, who reject the prevailing political relationships and processes - and do so in the name of modernity, *civiltà,* and in rejection of backwardness, even if, in the last analysis they do not, or cannot put their views into practice. This varies from those who are afraid to vote according to ideological conviction to those more volubly Communist who find their actions interpreted in terms of the prevailing political cynicism.

CHAPTER NINE
Self-image and identity

1. Introduction

In the previous chapters we concentrated on the various social relationships internal to the community - the family, class and status, and politics. We saw clearly that the criteria according to which people positioned themselves and were positioned by others, within these relationships were strongly influenced, if not defined by, the images of backwardness and modernity that are so fundamental to the core-periphery relationship as it has developed in southern Italy.

As was emphasised, this self-positioning and being positioned by others was a matter of struggle. It could indeed be described as a 'war' of position in which the periphery - i.e.in this case the Grottesi - not only have less access than the core to the symbols of modernity and *civiltà* but also less control over the definition of what is to be legitimately considered as modern or *civile* . For a multitude of historical reasons they occupy from the outset an inferior position in the dominant classification.

The nature of this struggle was illustrated by describing the ways in which people distanced themselves from or associated themselves with various values, attitudes, objects, in their everyday lives and relationships; and also by describing their ambivalence, uncertainty, self-consciousness.

In this chapter I want to look again at their various responses and strategies, however, this time in the context of a different set of relationships. I want to turn away from the more taken-for-granted, implicit aspects of identity and towards those expressions of identity which are more rather than less explicit; more, rather than less self-conscious; in other words at those contexts in which people put on the 'badge' of identity and parade it rather than just 'be'; and at those relationships in which their face is turned outward from the community. This tends to be in formal or quasi-formal contexts when they are reflecting on their own history and tradition (e.g. in local festivals); or when they are expressing a sense of belonging or community identity through local rivalries; or when they are expressing their position in relation to the North and northerners. Once again all of these aspects are interrelated.

2. Jockeying for Position in the Local Arena

2.1.Local History and Identity

In Chapter 3 I looked at local history and selected those aspects of Grotta's past that were specifically relevant to an understanding of the town's experience of the stages of integration and the development locally of images of backwardness and modernity. To a large extent this put to one side local people's own version of their past and, more importantly, the specific purposes they have for calling upon it. It is this that I wish to discuss here.

Throughout the local area, history, the older the better, is an essential element of the identity of any town. Each has at least one local historian and usually at least one history book describing the town's past from the earliest possible times. The qualities and patrimony of each in these terms is documented and then becomes the basis for debate and rivalry between towns as they assess each other's authenticity, each other's importance in the historical scheme of things and the extent to which these contribute to their relative *civiltà* and nobility.

In these respects the Grottesi have something of a problem. One of the regular jibes made at them by other towns was that they were *without* history. The local historians did their best to put things right by amassing as much information about the town's past as possible and publishing it to counter this image. One historian expressed the problem as follows:

> *Grotta è sempre stato trascurato. Gli altri ci sfottano, dicono che non abbiamo storia. Ma non è vero! Grotta è uno dei paesi più vecchi della provincia ... è vecchissimo!*
>
> Grotta has always been neglected. The others pull our legs, they say we don't have any history. But its not true! Grotta is one of the oldest towns of the province. It is extremely old.

Another local concerned about this reputation, and with a keen interest in local history stressed the town's importance in these terms:

> *Le nostre terre sono antichissimi, fertilissimi. Dai tempi mediovali fino ai tempi recenti, La Valle Ufita era padulosa. Però, ci sono stati scoperti dei resti Etruschi e Romani - tombi di sacerdoti e nobili - vuol dire che prima nel nostro territorio c'era una clima diversa, c'erano questi antichissimi insediamenti umani.*
>
> Our lands are very ancient, very fertile. From mediæval times up until recently, the Ufita Valley was marshy. But Etruscan and Roman remains have been found - tombs of priests and nobles -

meaning that before in our territory there was a different climate and there were these very ancient human settlements.

Another way of establishing the antiquity of the town was through explanations of the meaning of the name, 'Grottaminarda'. There was some dispute about this both within Grotta and with other towns. Some attributed the 'Grotta' part to association of the town with the caverns of Aeclanum, an ancient Roman settlement that has been excavated just outside Grotta; while 'minarda' was said to be a contraction of Mainardo, the name of the first holder of the feudal estate and builder of the mediæval castle in the *centro storico*.

Others suggested that the name was derived from a crypt located in the area and dedicated to the goddess Minerva - hence, in Latin, *Crypta Minervæ* becomes in Italian, Grottaminarda. Again the link is with Roman times. In both cases what is interesting is the attempt to make a connection with the ancient past and thus to establish the depth of the town's *civiltà*.

This reached some acrimonious levels when it was suggested, as some Grottesi did, that Aeclanum was in fact a proto-Grottaminarda and that Grotta emerged from the ruins of the Roman settlement after it was destroyed in the seventh century. The claim was backed up by pointing out that Aeclanum was a resting place for troops travelling on the Via Appia and this same function has always been one of the principal functions, indeed the *raison d'etre* of Grotta as far as local people are concerned. We will return to this shortly.

Such claims particularly enraged the inhabitants of neighbouring Mirabella Eclano in whose territory the remains are in fact situated and whose name is derived from the ancient settlement. Several times I witnessed vigorous arguments with people from Mirabella over whose cultural patrimony the remains belonged to.

This kind of vicarious association with antiquity was extended to many other things. However, by far the most frequently mentioned and popular example of this tendency with which everyone in the community associated themselves was the fact that for three centuries in mediæval times, the *feudo* of Grottaminarda was in the possession of the D'Aquino or Aquinas family, the family of the great Catholic theologian and Saint, Thomas Aquinas.

Many Grottese in fact claim that he was born in the town, contesting the established version of his life story that says he was born at Roccasecca in the province of Caserta. Neighbouring towns deny and ridicule this suggestion as another vain attempt of

Grottesi to secure for themselves an honourable history. One of the local history books at Grotta begins as follows:

> *Provate a chiedere a un qualsiasi grottese notizie su Tommaso D'Aquino ed egli vi risponderà che il Dottore Angelica, gran filosofo e Santo della Chiesa, vide proprio a Grotta la luce*
>
> Try asking any Grottese information about Thomas Aquinas and he will tell you that the Angelic Doctor, great philosopher and Saint of the Church, was actually born at Grotta.

The author goes on to examine the evidence *"su un piano più strettamente storico"* - "on a more strictly historical basis", without resorting to hearsay, and concludes that the matter is inconclusive, thus leaving room for the speculation to continue.

It is also said locally although not officially recognised by the Church, that St. Thomas performed a miracle at Grotta causing a spring to form beneath the hoof of his horse. Today the spring is said to possess extraordinary qualities, being warm in winter and cold in summer. Those who drink from the fountain will never again leave, or will always return to Grotta.

The way in which this story was told to me brings out clearly the contemporary local approach to history and local tradition. Thus *no-one* described this story to me from a point of view of belief. Everyone put some kind of gloss on it to indicate their scepticism. For some it was a load of superstitious nonsense, vehemently criticised; others immediately undermined it by following the tale with the 'scientific' reasons for the unusual temperature of the water:

> *Hanno fatto degli analisi scientifici e hanno scoperto che la temperatura è costante. Solo che in estate* sembra *freddo e in inverno* sembra *caldo relativo alla temperatura del'aria.*
>
> They've done scientific tests and they discovered that the temperature of the water is constant. Its just that in summer it *seems* cold, and in winter warm in relation to the air temperature.

Some people were more non-committal about the version they held to be true but usually seemed apologetic or embarrassed at the 'mythical' version. In all the responses there was once again, a self-consciousness about, and a distancing from anything that might be taken to reveal backwardness or lack of *civiltà*, together with an association with the dominant classification of knowledge - a concern to be 'strictly historical'; to support the scientific explanation for the miracle.

This can be seen in most of the above examples where there is an attempt to enter into an educated, 'modern', core discourse about history. The terms used and the choices made about what counts as important are less derived from a local (perhaps oral) tradition than from a response to what will confer status and recognition (that is, distance from backwardness) in a much wider contemporary sphere. Hence the concern with 'cultural patrimony' or as it is more frequently described *'patrimonio storico-culturale-artistico locale'*. Also falling into this patrimony and listed both for my benefit and indeed to establish the town's status, were any buildings, monuments, churches and any famous people to which they were attached in any way. The church of Santa Maria Maggiore and its all-important bell-tower or *campanile* (the most important symbol of the town), were designed by the famous architect, Vanvitelli who was also responsible for, among other things, the 18th Century king's residence or *Reggia* at Caserta.

Overall, people frequently emphasised history in affirming their identity, drawing attention to the town's patrimony. When not referring to the castle, the archaeological discoveries at Aeclanum, the Vanvitelli church, the terms they used were extremely general and abstract and often explicitly sociological. The characters that peopled their accounts were not local personages but *la classe dirigente* (the ruling class), *il popolo* (the people), *i contadini* ; and the area affected by this history was more often *il Sud* (the South) rather than Grottaminarda. In this then we can clearly see again a distancing from things local and backward as the local account of the past responds and adapts to the models and stereotypes of a dominant mode of presenting history.

2.2. Grotta as 'Crossroads'

The main characteristic that people single out as definitive of Grotta was not however its history. Instead, the feature that was always referred to in situation after situation was the town's position as a *nodo stradale* or 'crossroads'; a place that was always busy with traffic and travellers coming and going, stopping to rest - *un paese di transito* or passaggio - a place to pass through. Although this may not seem to some people - and certainly not to the town's neighbours - as a particularly noble characteristic, the Grottese themselves have developed a large repertoire of ways of elaborating it to a highly important and prestigious quality, and of making it the explanation of a variety of other identifying characteristics of town and people.

Among these, history does of course play its part and we have already seen how the remains at Aeclanum are used to good effect in this respect. Even if they are not

mentioned,the character of the town as *paese di transito* is attributed to its being situated on the Via Appia. From these beginnings the theme is developed through history to the contemporary period. Major events are singled out for mention: the construction of the *Via Regia* or Royal Way under the orders of Carlo Angio (Charles of Angerin); and then its reconstruction on the order of the Bourbon king Carlo III in the 18th century. The picture portrayed of the result of such developments is of a busy, flourishing town at the hub of the economy of the area and indeed the nation, with the coming and going of merchants between Naples and Foggia and of shepherds from Abruzzo. One of the local historians describes it in his book thus:

> *"E Grottaminarda era tappa obbligata per i pastori d'Abruzzo, perchè si trovava a metà strada ed era ricca di acque e di verde ed era in pianura e il numero di taverne per ospitare i pastori cresceva a vista d' occhio, così pure il numero di botteghe che rifornivano di tutto i pastori.*
>
> And Grotta was an obligatory stopping place for the Abruzzese shepherds ... since it was the halfway point and was rich in water and pasture and was on the plain; and the number of taverns to give shelter to the shepherds grew before everyone's eyes as did the shops providing them with all they needed.
> (Palomba 1983: 130-1)

More frequently this kind of discussion of the historic character of the town is used to establish a continuity with the present and an explanation for its contemporary condition. This can be seen in the following description taken from an undated and unacknowledged report in the town hall. It is typical not only of frequent similar statements found in official documents of the Town Council but also in everyday descriptions of their town by local people.

> *A differenza di tanti altri paesi dell'Irpinia Grottaminarda è oggi un Centro in piena espansione; uno dei paesi di cui il decremento demografico è compensato da vaste correnti immigratorie dovuta sia al suo persistente ruolo di nodo stradale importantissima sulla grande arteria Napoli-Foggia fatta costruire da Carlo III a partire dal 1734, sia dalla recente installazione di uno stabilimento industriale FIAT di notevoli dimensioni.*
>
> In opposition to so many other Irpinian towns, Grotta is today a rapidly expanding centre, one of the towns in which the demographic decrease is compensated by vast immigratory currents due both to its persistant role as an extremely important crossroads on the great Naples-Foggia artery built by Carlo III in 1734, and to the recent installation of a FIAT factory of notable dimensions.

The recent changes are thus readily accepted and sit easily with people's image of the town's history. In becoming an expanding centre Grotta is merely fulfilling its natural destiny.

In fact this image of the town is of great importance to people's identity and is intimately related to the opposition discussed earlier between *paese* and *campagna*. It is expressed particularly clearly in the formal and public context of political debate, in demands and appeals to higher authorities for resources, and in other contexts in which people are taking up a position *vis-a-vis* other towns. It also emerges in various more or less subtle ways in everyday conversations.

In these contexts reference to the town's centrality is almost obligatory. As the following examples will show this is not a new phenomenon but it is nevertheless possible to see a qualitative change in the way in which the image is expressed which is revealing of the nature of the core-periphery relationship that is our concern.

One of the most common expressions of this image comes in requests to higher governmental authorities for more resources[1]. In 1942 it was used in a request for a pay rise for *segretario comunale*. In 1958 it was used as the main grounds of an appeal to the Government to prevent the *Consorzio Bonifica Ufita* being transferred to nearby Ariano. In 1966 it was the main argument of a similar appeal to ensure that an exit on the new Naples-Bari motorway was built at Grotta. In the 1970's it was the justification, whatever the practical reasons, for the siting of the Fiat factory just outside the town and since then it has continued to be both the explanation of, and justification for, developments to the town.

In every appeal two things are mentioned: firstly the number of important public and private institutions and services 'possessed' by the town - for example, Tax Office, Registry Office, Magistrates Court, Police Station, banks etc., together with a list of the towns whose inhabitants are required to come to Grotta to make use of them. These change as time goes on - the list gets more extensive and different things are emphasised. Secondly a description of the town's topographical situation, the 'natural' tendency of roads to gravitate on the town and another list of towns whose inhabitants must use Grotta as a thoroughfare in order to get from one place to another.

In this way the Grottesi set themselves in opposition to the towns listed. The latter, because they are dependant for certain services on Grotta are considered by Grottesi to be less *civile*, more *arretrato*. The criteria of distinction then, are the same as those used to distinguish social strata - by reference to the opposition between *paese* and

[1] c.f. Chapter Four section 2.5.

campagna. Grotta thus places itself at the centre, or more precisely *as* the centre , of an area surrounded by towns which are situated in the *campagna* and which are populated entirely by *cafoni.*

This spatial image is further developed in relation to the recent changes, in particular the coming of Fiat, which has made the town a *polo industriale* - an industrial pole - and *un centro di sviluppo* - a centre of development. These terms are frequently used in people's representation of Grotta, as well as the designation of the town, as *cerniera* or 'hinge' between the industrial and urban centres of Avellino and Naples and the backward internal areas of the province. In adopting these designations Grottesi are making use of the official language of development discussed in earlier chapters, thus representing themselves as a kind of outpost or vanguard of development in a desert of backwardness.

But the image is not merely a spatial one. It also entails an orientation towards time. In being increasingly tied up with the idea of development, the concern with centrality is also a matter of progression along the unilinear scale away from backwardness (and the past) and towards modernity (and the future). Both spatial and temporal come together in the following account of the role of the town by a local commentator taken from the provincial chronicles of the national daily *Il Mattino;*:

> *Si avvia a diventare il centro propulsore del comprensorio dell'Ufita. Grottaminarda ... si proietta nel futuro per attrezzarsi come città - modello dello suiluppo.*
>
> It is setting out to become the 'propulsive' centre of the Ufita Valley district. Grottaminarda is projecting itself into the future to equip itself as a model-city of development .
>
> (*Il Mattino* Nov. 1984)

Aside from the obvious rhetoric of this statement it is apparent here that there is a facility with the language of development and an acceptance of its dictates - even if its objectives are not realised. The developments that have actually taken place and the ideology that accompanies them have thus readily been appropriated by the *Grottesi* as a means of reproducing their identity as inhabitants of an important centre within the zone. However this appropriation is not without cost, since in the process their own representations are appropriated to the much wider classification that distinguishes between core and periphery, backward and modern, uncivilised and civilised - in other words the dominant classification that has been discussed throughout. It is as if they have been tricked into stepping onto the treadmill of progress towards an ideal state of development - an ideal that is realised by the core - at least in the images it projects of itself.

It would thus be wrong in my view, to imagine that by mediating the language of development, and indeed the concrete effects of development, through a local idiom of centrality, the integrity of local identity is somehow maintained intact. Rather, it is more realistic to acknowledge that the local inhabitants cannot make such developments mean exactly what they like and that the appropriative action is two-way (and because of its greater power, weighted in favour of the core). Hence, we see that there has been a move from a more static picture of the importance of the town in the local arena towards a greater concern with development and 'escaping' from *arretratezza*. What constitutes this 'escape from backwardness' will be brought out further by looking at identity as expressed in everyday local rivalries.

People often have cause, in everyday movements between towns, to comment on the character of Grotta, relative to its neighbours. The principal assessment that emerges is that Grotta is a hive of buzzing commercial activity: life there is a lively social whirl, an *allegro walzer* (waltz) as one woman put it. They describe how others come from miles around to go shopping, meet friends, go for a *passeggiata*; and they point out the way in which the streets fill up with people and cars, not just on Sundays but every evening. And, as we saw earlier, travelling to the city from Grotta, be it to Naples or Rome, is a simple affair.

By contrast, the surrounding towns were represented as *paesi sperduti* - dispersed, isolated, literally, *lost* towns, separated from civilised social life. To live in such places (often described with a dismissive shrug and the words *"tre case"* - "three houses") is to live locked in the closed world of the past, *legato alla tradizione* - tied to tradition, left behind on the path towards development and modernity. It is to be where *"La gente non esce mai"* - "The people never go out" and where *"di sera non c'è nessuno per la strada"* - "in the evening there is no-one in the street".

In order to impress these characteristics upon me, friends in Grotta thought it sufficient merely to let me see these places with my own eyes. Thus we would drive around passing judgement: *"questo è il corso"* - "this is the main street"- they would declare derisively; "where is everyone?" another would ask - "they've all gone to bed" would come the reply, greeted with laughter and comments on the lack of things to do and places to go. On the way home, Grotta would be identified in the distance by the brightness of the public lighting, further testimony to its importance.

However, the town's claims to this position do not go undisputed. People from the neighbouring towns had ways of undermining them. Its position as crossroads was regarded as trivial - just a cluster of houses around a main road. What was so special about that? Moreover, it was seen to be lacking in many of the qualities of civility and modernity that are universally recognised in the area. Lack of history has already been mentioned as one line of attack. The importance of the town as a centre is also attacked by pointing to its lack of modern amenities - particularly those associated with leisure and social life. It would be pointed out that the town only had one *scuola superiore* and this was the low status *Istituto Tecnico.*; its cinema had been closed for years; unlike other towns it had no covered swimming pool or well-equipped *campo sportivo*. Young people would point out that it did not even have a disco. Significantly also, its lack of anyone influential enough on the political scene to alter this situation was frequently mentioned.

The Grottesi themselves recognised their lack of such amenities *and* that this lack dented their claim to status. But in the context of local rivalries at least, this situation was represented as being the result of the failings of specific individuals among the local elite; their failure to obtain the resources which rather than *transform* the town, would render unto it that which was its due. Hence the modern amenities of smaller neighbouring towns were regarded as merely the swaggering of 'poor relations' and *emergenti* - just like the new houses and tobacco money of Grottesi peasants.

What was more important for many Grottesi was that they were in their own estimation, *più evoluti* (more 'evolved', civilised) and *progressivi* (progressive, forward-thinking) as a result of their connection to the centre. Such qualities, they say, are derived from coming into closer contact with new ideas as they spread across the country. Hence the town is always one step ahead of its neighbours and feels the changes first. According to one local politician, major events at national level are always mirrored simultaneously in events at Grotta.

It could be suggested that this paramount concern with centrality is principally a consequence of the political organisation of the state, together with the economic marginality of places like Grottaminarda. Vertical links between community and the state are more important than horizontal ones between communities when gaining access to scarce resources. This is indeed reflected in, for example, the transport system, where interprovincial services are very poor. *Campanilismo* or civic pride thus flourishes and the ability of a town and its politicians to obtain state resources becomes a principal criterion of judgement.

However this situation is much more than a political and economic one. It is much more than a struggle for political resources and this can be seen quite clearly in the ideological uses to which such resources are put. They are immediately converted into strategic tools in a symbolic struggle for identity.

A further set of qualities that Grottesi explain with reference to the town's position as crossroads is related to their treatment of strangers. Not surprisingly, they represent themselves as extremely *ospitale* (hospitable) and *aperto* (open). Strangers and incomers are, the locals say, readily accepted and frequently settle happily in the town. But this is not simply the self-promotion that most human groups seem to engage in. It has a particular character. In emphasising their hospitality, local people acknowledge that they *have* to be this way: incomers and strangers have been the lifeblood of the town for centuries. As usual things work both ways and it is said that travellers stop at Grotta because they know that they will receive a good welcome. Hospitality has thus developed through adaptation to a constant flow of people.

Yet it is precisely this that for most of the town's neighbours, makes Grotta an *in*hospitable place. For them the Grottesi are *cattiva gente* (a bad lot). The constant flow makes of the inhabitants an unreliable mixture, lacking in order, given to anti-social behaviour, fighting, swearing. Once again it is customary among human groups to assess opponents or neighbours negatively. But again what is interesting is the way in which this is done in relation to the particular characteristics of the town.

The Grottesi response to this assessment is in fact to *accept* it, but once again to turn it into a positive attribute. Hence they cultivate a kind of 'Wild West' image in which, while being hospitable, they do not stand any nonsense from strangers who actually or potentially threaten the town, or them as individuals. They say: *"Siamo forti, noi Grottesi ... non abbiamo paura"* - "We're strong, we Grottesi ... we're not afraid" and numerous tales were cited to illustrate these qualities.

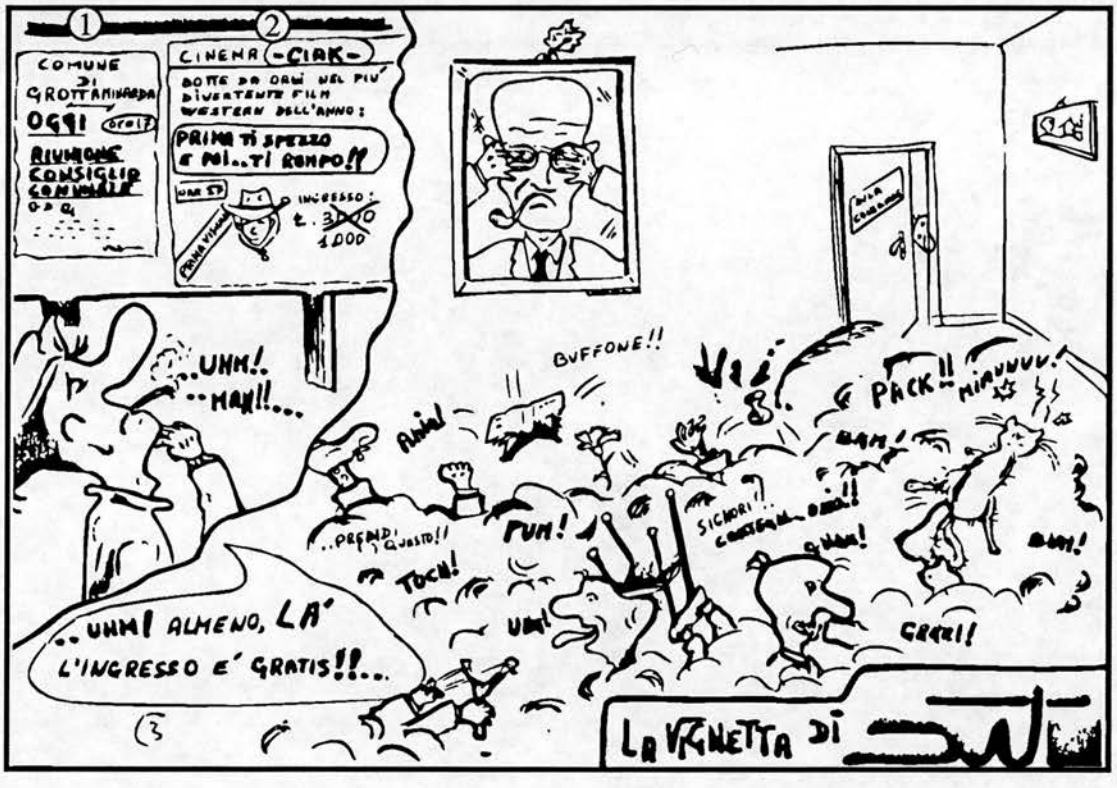
It was for this reason, it was said, that the *cammorra* had failed to gain a foothold in the town[1]. Another locally famous example was an attempted robbery on a jeweller. His son was held at gunpoint as the robbers made their demands. However, they were taken by surprise when the jeweller himself pulled a gun from under the counter and

[1]The *cammorra* are the Neapolitan version of the Mafia. I have no evidence for the truth or otherwise of the Grottesi claims to success against organised crime.

shot and killed the assailant. An accomplice keeping watch outside was stopped in his tracks as he ran off by another shot from the jeweller.

In a similar vein and again told to illustrate the durezza (hardness) of the Grottesi is the story of some elderly peasant women who saw off some robbers who were attempting to hold up the post office. The takings would have been a substantial sum of welfare benefits about to be distributed to the peasants. It was said that the offender was scared off by an old woman who not realising what was going on pushed him out of the way and told him to get to the end of the queue. The Grottesi revelled in this image which showed that such is their strength that even an old woman can stand up to attack. Such images emerged in other contexts.

In the cartoon below, a bystander is depicted deciding whether to go to the latest western at the cinema or to attend a town council meeting:



1) GROTTAMINARDA TOWN HALL – MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL TODAY

2) CINEMA 'CIAK' – SAVAGE FIGHTING IN THE MOST ENTERTAINING WESTERN OF THE YEAR: "FIRST I'LL BREAK YOU THEN .... I'LL BASH YOU"

ENTRANCE 50p

3) "MM..... ATLEAST THERE, THE ENTRANCE IS FREE!!"

(From Provincial Newspaper *Corriere dell'Ufita* Jan/Feb 1985)

As can be seen, these meetings had something of a reputation locally. The same was true of Grotta's football team and supporters. In fact, football provides further insight into the way in which people's ideas and values have become incorporated into the dominant classification.

At the level of local rivalries and in the context of Grotta's image as a hard, wild, strong town, the most significant events were the annual football tournaments in which a number of the neighbouring towns played.

The first of these tournaments took place at nearby Sturno, which was renowned for its well kept, grass playing field with terracing, floodlights and perimeter fencing. Most men who were able and some young women attended the matches in which Grotta took part and everyone took great satisfaction from the idea of descending on this small backward town and taking it over for a few evenings. There was a festival atmosphere with trumpets and drums and the Grottesi insisting on making the most noise and letting off the biggest fireworks and smokebombs. They even indulged in throwing stones and tin cans at, and inciting fights with, the rival supporters.

Among the towns playing, Grotta were expected to win being the largest and having, therefore, the strongest team. When they eventually did (though narrowly) there was a pitch invasion as the 'hard core' of supporters tore down the fence and displayed their *striscione* (a huge banner) in the middle of the pitch. Then they took the cup home in a long train of cars, each blaring its horn and with its occupants hanging out the car windows, singing and shouting and letting off more fireworks. They were proud to have shown themselves to be true to their own nature - hard, strong and wild. One older man reflected on the event, saying to me:

> *I Grottesi devono sentirsi sempre i migliori. Sono prepotenti. Devono vincere sempre.*
>
> The Grottesi always have to feel that they're the best. They're bullies. They always have to win.

However, although he was being mildly critical, it was clear from his tone and expression, the slight smirk on his lips, that he was amused by, and approved of the antics of the young fans.

In the next tournament, this time held at another nearby town, Flumeri, both team and supporters lived up to their name. In the semi-finals they were being badly beaten by San Nicola Baronia - a small town considered to be in the *really* backward

internal area of the province. The Grottesi players refused to play on after a goal they had scored was, correctly, disallowed. More than ten minutes passed with the referee failing to take control. He was then assaulted by one of the Grottesi players, at which point he retired to the dressing room and refused to carry on. This was the cue for the supporters to act. They climbed over the fence and started fighting with rival supporters and those who were blocking their way to the referee - their real target.

Instead of being disqualified, the match was replayed and Grotta went on to win. They thus showed themselves to be intent on winning, whatever the means.

These examples are interesting however, not only because they display the qualities and characteristics which people associate with Grotta. In addition to this, they show the way in which local rivalries, while being reproduced, have also been transformed. In this example we see that the opposition, based upon civic pride, has remained. However, the specific elements, the *idiom* used to represent and reinforce this opposition were those of a *national* culture of football. Local rivalry has thus become imbued with a national flavour. The young people were in my view, emulating the behaviour of football supporters at national level. They were entering into the wider discourse of the core. This is manifested further by allegiance to teams in the national league. The teams with the greatest support are not Naples and Avellino, even though both are in the first division and the former have now won the league several times. Rather the big *northern* teams in Milan and Turin have the widest support.

3. Festivals, Tradition and Identity

In the previous section we looked at the way in which the Grottesi characterise their town and the qualities they see themselves possessing as a consequence. In this section we will turn from these self-assessments to look at the way in which people express their identity - local or otherwise - through the various festivals and special occasions that occur annually. Again the main focus will be with people's sense of place and the way in which this sense is dominated by a concern to dissociate themselves from the dominant definition of backwardness. In particular here, I will look at the sense of place in relation to tradition and the past since attitudes towards these emerge forcefully in the festivals.

The three main festivals of the town take place in the summer months of July and August. Each festival is associated with one of the three main political forces in the town. *Il Festone* (i.e. the 'big festival') is held towards the end of August and is the

'establishment' *festa*, centering on religious devotion to San Rocco and Sant'Antonio. It is the festa which everyone recognises as the main *festa*, but in its organisation is largely controlled by the Church and the DC.

Setting themselves in opposition to this are the *Festa de l'Unità*, the PCI festa held at *Ferragosto* (15 &16th August); and the *Festa de l'Avanti*, the Socialist Party festival held at the end of July. Both of these party political festivals are named after the official national newspaper of their respective parties.

Next in importance to these come *Carnevale*, the traditional festival of excess immediately prior to Lent; the celebration of Holy Week and Easter; and *Tutti Morti* or All Souls' Day. In addition, there are a number of other religious festivals, notably that of *Sant'Antonio Picerill'*, or 'little Saint Anthony' (which is organised by the devotees of a small shrine to the saint in a particular *rione* of the town); as well as the feasts of Corpus Christi and San Giuseppe.

Several secular festivals are celebrated too: *la festa dei caduti* (i.e. the 'fallen' or war dead); Mother's Day; Women's Day; Valentine's Day. Finally certain media festivals have taken on a degree of importance in people's lives: the *Festa di San Remo* - a national equivalent to the Eurovision Song Contest is an example. Other events which are not celebrated annually but which receive a high media profile and can perhaps be included in this last category are major rock concerts, particularly Band Aid and other benefit events. These are extremely popular with young people.

Christmas is principally a family celebration and does not involve intense gift giving. However, gifts are given to children on the Feast of the Epiphany, otherwise known as *la Befana*. This is the name of an old woman said to bring gifts on this night.

Among the religious festivals, only the Festone, Sant'Antonio Picerill' and Tutti Morti are major public occasions on which there is a significant amount of formal organised activity other than church services and in which the whole community is involved. Even Holy Week and Easter are relatively low-key affairs in terms of public celebration, despite their paramount importance in the liturgical calender.

Holy Week celebrations begin on the Friday before Good Friday with the feast of the *Madonna Addolorata* - Our Lady of Sorrow. A procession is led through the town with a statue of the Madonna dressed in black. She is said to be searching and grieving for her son. The procession I saw involved about 100 people, with not more than 10 men, including the priest, two other clergy and an acolyte. The rest were the core of devout

women who attended church daily. They took turns at carrying the statue. Two young girls walked along the sides of the procession giving out prayer cards to onlookers and collecting contributions. Overall however, few people were intesrested in the event.

On Palm Sunday the Masses took place in the Social Centre to accommodate the extra numbers who attended at this time of the year. People exchanged palms and olive branches and visited relatives and neighbours. The atmosphere was slightly more festive than a normal Sunday with more people in the streets and in the *piazza*.

As the week progressed, more and more people began to arrive back from abroad and elsewhere in Italy, for their Easter break. Every busload arriving in the town produced a new batch of returnees laden with baggage. Houses filled up with sons and daughters, girlfriends and boyfriends, husbands, wives, children, taking time off from their work in Pisa, Rome, Bologna, Milan or further afield. Women began to prepare various foods for Easter Sunday. In many dishes wholegrain wheat was the principal ingredient.

Holy Thursday is the day on which the Church celebrates the Passion and Death of Christ and on which in many towns throughout Italy this is re-enacted in a publically staged *via crucis* or Way of the Cross. At Grotta this does not happen. Rather there is the normal Mass of the Passion, after which the Blessed Sacrament is taken from the tabernacle and placed in the *Sepulcro* or Altar of Repose. Here it is left for people in the town to visit overnight until noon on Good Friday. More people did this than attended the Mass.

On Good Friday comes the celebration of the Last Supper. For this the church was very busy. It was followed by another procession of the *Madonna Addolorata*, this time holding a white handkerchief to her face and preceded by a prostrate statue of Jesus on his death bed. The priest pleaded with those present not to treat the event like a funeral with the implication that this is precisely what they usually did. Again it was the regular devotees who carried the statues. A girl walked at the front with a cushion draped with ribbons onto which bystanders pinned contributions. Again however it was a rather low key affair in which few took part or watched.

Saturday saw more people arrive for the holiday. That evening the *Vigilia di Pasqua* - Easter Vigil, was held; then the next morning, the main Easter service. The congregation brought bread to be blessed and a display of newly sprung wheat was placed

on the altar. Many people who did not go to church at any other time of the year went on this day.

The *passeggiata* that followed was extremely busy, noisy, bright celebratory. People dressed in new spring clothes and met up with friends and relatives that they had not seen since the same time the previous year, or at best since Christmas. Shops were open, particularly the butchers along *il Corso* who had newly slaughtered lambs hung outside by the dozen.

At a certain point the streets seemed to become suddenly empty as people headed home for the family meal - a long and drawn out affair with several courses and as many people present as possible. Eggs, lamb, whole grain wheat were foremost in the meal.

At this time of year, children are given chocolate eggs, increasingly more elaborately packaged and with gifts of varying quality inside, from plastic toys to gold jewellery. Television during this period is littered with advertisements for the various types of *colombe* on sale. These are dove-shaped versions of the Christmas sponge cakes known as *panettone*. They do not correspond to any locally made item, but instead are a northern tradition. However, they are now extremely popular both at Grotta and nationally.

Perhaps more important than any of these events, certainly in terms of anticipation and subsequent enjoyment is the following day, *Pasquetta*, when people go on a holiday outing, usually into the hills for a picnic. Again this is a nationwide event and one which dominates the media as "more traffic than ever before" takes to the highways, causing delays, traffic jams and more accidents. No-one made any mention of this being a day of pilgrimage (c.f. Silverman 1975: 151).

The emphasis in this period is on the family rather than the community, and inasmuch as people's sense of place beyond the family is expressed, they seem to be placing themselves in the national, rather than local arena. This is reflected not only in the eating of *colomba* and the *pasquetta* excursion, but also in the lack of interest in the religious ceremonial. The latter was generally identified with traditional elements in the town and hence, for the most part, to be avoided.

Most of the other major feast days in the liturgical calendar are treated in the same way - i.e. with a distinct lack of concern, except by the core of devotees. The feast of *Corpus Domini* in early June, is celebrated with a procession. The priest carries the Blessed Sacrament around the streets of the town, stopping at altars that have been set up

in the doorways of shops and houses. He is followed by the children who most recently made their first communion, wearing their first communion dress again and carrying white lilies. White linen is draped around the altars and they are decorated with flowers. However, very few altars are now set up - only two on the day I was present - and this was lamented by the priest and the women who had set them up. Those who happened to be in the street at the time watched the procession as it passed, but few made any attempt to participate.

August 15th is the feast of the Assumption but receives little attention as a religious event. It is overshadowed by the Communist *festa de l'Unità* which begins on this day. December 8 is the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the night of *i falò* - bonfires. However, again only a few groups of people took the trouble to light the traditional bonfires on street corners.

As mentioned however, there are some religious festivals that are major public occasions. Let us turn to these now to look at the ways people express their identity.

The feast of *Tutti Morti*, also describe in Chapter Six above, is a unique occasion in the lives of Grottesi. It is not a feast which is particular to them, nor do they see it as such. Neither does it have any ritual practices which are unique to Grotta. At the same time it was probably the only *festa* surrounding which there appeared to be no ambivalence, no concern with being seen to be backward or trying to be modern. There was no self-reflection on the event as 'traditional'. Rather, everything was taken-for-granted, accepted and almost everyone in the community took part at some stage or another.

The day prior to *Tutti Morti* (itself the feast of *Tutti Santi*), women began visiting the cemetery and decorating the family graves with flowers and candles. The flower shops were particularly busy at this time and other shops - grocers, hardware stores - had stacks of large thick candles surrounded with red plastic. Since it was a feast day, the streets were busy with people coming and going and the Masses were busier than usual for a weekday.

The next day people began to visit the cemetery in large numbers to pay their respects to their dead. This went on all day although most went in the evening, during or after the large procession that followed evening Mass. Varying amounts of time were spent praying and talking to friends and neighbours. Men usually stood in front of the grave for a perfunctory few minutes and then left or walked around talking. Women, on the other hand, spent hours sitting by the graves, adjusting flowers, lighting candles,

laying trinkets and photographs on them. There appeared to be a great deal of competition to see who had the biggest and best display.

The atmosphere was not in the least mournful. People simply talked as normal, taking the whole event very much for granted. Other than that there was very little to it in terms of ritual or formal ceremonial - yet everyone in the community was involved, congregated at the graveside to commemorate the community's dead. No-one questioned the value of doing so, or sought to relegate it to the status of backwardness on grounds of morbidity, 'superstition' about death, old-fashionedness etc, as in other contexts.

The remaining two religious festivals - *il Festone* and *Sant'Antonio Piccerillo* - were very similar in many respects; and both were very similar to the main political festivals - the PCI's *festa de l'Unità* and the PSI's *festa de l'Avanti*. I will therefore consider these festivals together.

Il Festone

Il Festone takes place towards the end of August each year and lasts for two days. It is the formal celebration of the town's two patron saints - Sant'Antonio and San Rocco. The celebrations do not take place on the feast days of the two saints but at the height of summer when people are on holiday.

During the day there was a large *fiera* or fair, similar to the Monday market but much larger and with a greater variety of stalls. Agricultural machinery and livestock is on display and on sale. Illuminations are put up along the main streets and in the *piazza*.

The central event in religious terms is the procession in the evening. Statues of the two saints, lavishly adorned with gold, are placed on a *carro* (float) - in this case a small lorry draped with red and white cloths and decorated with gladiolas and candles. It is led through the streets with the priests, the *sindaco* and other members of the local elite at the head together with two women who hold the ribbon-draped cushions to which contributions are pinned. Money was also pinned to the drapes at the front of the float.

Having toured the streets of the town, the saints are then carried into the church where a mass is said in their honour. In his homily, the priest talked of the importance of the event as traditional and urged people to ensure that this tradition was kept going. Devotion to the saints was essential to the spiritual welfare of the town. The procession and the Mass were the *really* important, central parts of the celebration, he said.

Meanwhile, however, most of the population of the town were thronging the streets, in and out of bars, spending money at the stalls set up along the pavements: Bugs Bunny balloons, coca-cola, dried fruit, coconut, hot-dogs, ice-cream,lupin seeds, nuts, , pizza, *porchetta* (roast pork sliced from a whole pig), pork tripe, sunflower seeds, sausages, sweets, teddy bears, toys, water-melon.

People spoke of the evening entertainment to come in the *piazza* - dancing, food and drink, a band, fireworks, a mini-lottery, tombola (bingo) with various prizes. These included a stereo system, colour TV, other electrical appliances,

toys, bottles of brandy, whisky etc. The most important topics of discussion were the quality of the band and to some extent the prizes. A relatively famous pop singer, recognised nationally, had been procured. This was remarked upon with approval by most people, demonstrating in their view, the modernity of the town. For many young people however, he was not modern enough, particularly when they had been to see Bruce Springsteen, for example, when he had played in Milan. A town which was *più civile, più aggiornato* (up to date), could do better than this.

The food served in the *piazza* was mainly beer and *panini* (filled rolls) although more 'traditional' fare was available and was, significantly, presented as such: *piatti tradizionali grottesi* - traditional Grottesi dishes. The dancing, after the appearance of the pop star to rapturous applause, went on until the early hours of the morning.

Sant'Antonio Piccerill'

The *festa di Sant'Antonio Piccerillo* was a much smaller affair. Indeed the adjective *piccerill'* is dialect for little (perhaps better rendered by the Scottish 'wee'). The St. Anthony in question is the same as in the Festone (i.e. St Anthony of Padua) but the statue was the one held in a small shrine and chapel in *rione capelluzzo* (i.e. 'little chapel quarter'). Thus the festa 'belongs' to the people of this quarter - it is *their festa*, while also being an accepted part of the annual round of *feste* in the town.

It takes place on June 22, a week after the saint's feast day proper, and in some ways is a kind of run up to the larger summer *festone*. Again the procession is the religious focus. The statue was carried this time, on the shoulders of people from the rione, men and women. And again money was pinned to ribbon-draped cushions and holy pictures exchanged for small offerings. The procession finished back at the little chapel where an altar had been set up on the back of a lorry. As Mass was said, the finishing touches were put to the street lights and the stalls of food, gifts and trinkets.

Mass was followed by a firework display and then the music began. Again the quality of entertainment was high on people's list of priorities. The previous evening several young people had urged me to avoid the event saying that they always had the same kind of terrible old-fashioned Neapolitan singer, singing awful Neapolitan love songs. When I replied that I quite liked Neapolitan love songs, a young woman said sympathetically to the rest of the company that I did not really understand the meaning of many of the songs. The rest agreed and there followed a lengthy discussion about the questionable ideological basis of the genre. *"'O Sole mio"* and *"Turna' a Surriento"* were deemed to be fairly innocuous, but there were many more that expressed what they regarded as an outmoded and barbaric way of thinking: those for example which referred to *"cosidetti delitti d'onore"* - so-called crimes of honour. Such songs were justifications for this kind of thinking and behaviour and as such were to be condemned. That all those speaking on this occasion were or had at some time been, students and were mostly supporters of the Communist Party should not explain away their attitude.

Not everyone dissociated themselves so explicitly from the entertainment provided. At the same time, most did *in some way* do so. The singer and his band were seen to be somewhat provincial. Comments were made about his hairstyle, his dress, the fact that he was getting on a bit, the poor sound system, the poor quality of his voice. Many laughed at his efforts to sing modern songs, while in his own Neapolitan style, he was labelled pejoratively as traditional. *"Me fa cchiange' queste canzun'!"* - "These songs make me cry!"joked one man,

commenting ironically on the effect of such love songs *and* on the quality of the singer.

Another group of young people made sure they were out of town for the event and tried to persuade me to go to a bigger rock concert in Benevento taking place that evening. I stayed in Grotta out of a vague sense that a local cultural event was somehow more significant. Yet the question must be asked, which was the most important for the Grottesi? And which in fact can be said to be part of *their* culture? Others stayed and danced to the Neapolitan songs. When I quizzed them about why they were enjoying themselves so much if they did not like the music, they simply said they were making the best of what was available. It broke the monotony of everyday life in this backward area where they rarely had any kind of entertainment.

The two secular festivals of the PCI and PSI fall on consecutive weeks and are followed immediately by il Festone.

Festa de l'Avanti

The *Festa de l'Avanti,* named after the Socialist Party's newspaper, is a relatively limited affair due to the relatively small size of the party. Nevertheless, an attempt is made to match the others. Due to lack of funds there was no live entertainment, but instead the screening of two feature films in the *piazza* (*Missing* - conservative North American discovers injustices of South American regime and part played by own country in these, through disappearance of his son; and Pink Floyd's *The Wall*). The latter was particularly popular with the young people, giving them the chance to hear some of their favourite music. As usual, the stalls of food and drink and gifts were present, together with *piatti tradizionali* dished out by party members and dancing to music played over a P.A. system. The beginning of each evening was introduced by rather perfunctory speeches which did not try to make any particular point other than to urge people to take part and enjoy themselves. The event finished with a firework display on the second night.

Festa de l'Unità

As a much larger party the PCI were in a position to organise a more elaborate event. Having just played a part in the formation of the new left-wing administration, with its new Communist *sindaco,* they took the opportunity to put on a particularly impressive affair.

This *festa did* begin with a procession - not the parading of a saint, nor an atheist equivalent (e.g. a flag or banner). Instead it was a procession of *le pacchiane*[1] - men and mostly women dressed in the 'traditional' Grottese costume. The dress is only worn on special occasions and as far as I could gather this has always been

[1]The term *paccchiano* has a number of meanings. Generally it is associated with bad taste, vulgarity, ostentation, lack of refinement or kitsch. It is also another pejorative synonym for southern peasant. Specifically it is used to refer to peasant women in traditional dress which is held by townsfolk to be vulgar and ostentatious. It therefore carries the inherently negative significance that we have found to be common to the South and things southern.

Yet in local usage, the term is not used in this derogatory manner. Rather it simply refers to the collectivity of those dressed up in this manner on a particular occasion - no-one is a *pacchiana* all the time.

the case. It was not a costume derived from something worn by peasants all the time.

At the same time, the significance attached to *le pacchiane* in the PCI procession was altogether different from what it would have been in the past. Instead of being, as it were, the natural thing to wear on a special occasion, it was, here, a self-conscious attempt to be traditional or to represent tradition. Those who took part were mainly young people who would not normally have dreamt of wearing such clothing.

The women's costumes were long brightly coloured and heavily pleated skirts, white blouses and *cóccole* - necklaces of large golden balls, sometimes made from gold, sometimes painted acorns. Each woman also carried a length of bright cloth over her arm. The men wore black knee-breeches, white shirts, red neckerchiefs and felt hats with a feather on one side.

The procession led by an accordionist, came round the corner past the church, ignoring but disturbing the Mass for the feast of the Assumption that was taking place, along *il Corso* and into the main piazza where those taking part engaged in some rather chaotic and disorganised dancing for a few minutes until they acknowledged that they did not really know what they were doing.

Then, from a stage at one end of the *piazza*, a prominent member of the PCI gave a short speech about the *pacchiane* and their costumes before going on to announce the rest of the events for that evening and the next. Pointing to the dancers he said:

> *Queste sono i nostri costume tradizionali grottesi; queste sono le tradizioni nostri e dei nostri nonni. E sono tradizioni bellissimi, che abbiamo quasi completamente perduto ... dobbiamo cercare di riaccendere il nostro passato ...*
>
> These are our traditional Grottese costumes; these are our traditions and those of our grandfathers. And they are traditions that we have almost completely lost ... we must try to rekindle our past ...

He went on for around five to ten minutes, in this vein, lamenting the passing of tradition and exhorting people to try to recapture the past.

There then followed a political debate in which *i cittadini* - the citizens - were invited to put questions to the new *sindaco* and comment on the new administration. Very few people participated, other than local activists in the party.

Dancing in the *piazza* followed and again 'traditional Grottese fare' was available for those who wanted it.

The next day was Sunday and events had been organised for the whole day. One of the most significant of these was what was described as *"un giorno alla Fratta"*. People were invited to spend the day in the oldest part of the town amongst its tumble-down mediæval hovels, now abandoned. The purpose of this was

> *ritornare al mondo dei nostri nonni e rivivere il passato*
>
> to return to the world of our grandfathers and relive the past

A large group of people attended this, many of them schoolchildren, and they spent the day cleaning up the area and being shown some of the old skills of their

nonni - rope-making, chair-making, basket-weaving, making agricultural tools etc.

One woman in her twenties who had an artist's studio in town led a group of children as they painted wall murals on the newly whitewashed sides of the old houses. The murals were of women dressed in black and huddled together at a doorway, knitting and sewing. Interestingly, the artist herself was perhaps the trendiest person in the whole town - always 'one step ahead' of the rest of her peers in dress sense and deliberately aloof.

Later in the evening, the events to follow were again announced from the platform in the piazza. A resumé was given of the day's events at La Fratta, stressing the importance in terms of the maintenance of tradition at Grotta. The speaker urged people once again not to forget their past.

The entertainments then got under way again with all the usual stalls (food, sweets, toys, gifts etc.). The streets filled up with people. There was tombola and a lottery and party functionaries mingled with the crowd selling number slips for the bingo and tickets for the lottery. There was a great deal of excitement about the lottery prize - a computer. People gathered round to watch as a Univeristy graduate, returned from Como for the holidays, gave demonstrations of what the computer could do.

But as usual most interest was generated by the live entertainment. On this occasion it was particularly good by most people's standards. There was a comedy trio called *i Tarli* [1] who mimed and acted satirical sketches None of them were strictly Grottesi although one member had been born in the town. They were extremely professional and drew on a wide range of topics for the subject matter of their satire: the government of the day, advertising, the problems of local government. They adapted pop songs, changing the words to make fun of national politicians and personages. Local people proudly tipped them for wider, national fame.

This group were followed by a singer who *did* have a national reputation as one of the country's many *cantautori* - singer-songwriters. The songs were what I would describe as schmaltzy. They were typical of the kind of love song commonly heard in the media, at the San Remo festival. One or two jived-up numbers were included together with a Beatles song and all of these were well-received especially by the young people, who surged to the front, jumping up and down and dancing.

Everything about the performance was polished, from the appearance of the singer and his band in dress and bearing, to the equipment and sound system. All of this was commented upon favourably. People compared him with singers who had come in previous years and with other national artistes. They were obviously very familiar with national popular culture, and it was this culture in which they were participating on this occasion. At the same time they were aware that they were to an extent excluded from it since so few artistes came to play in such an isolated backwater of the South - and when it came down to it, even the ones that did were not that good.

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[1] literally woodworm; figuratively, any kind of 'gnawings', commonly *i tarli della coscienza* - the gnawings of conscience. As an explicitly left-wing group it is likely that they considered themselves to be gnawings at the conscience of a rotten system; giving the powers that be a headache by reminding them of their corruption.

From the above descriptions of four of the town's main festivals, it is possible to discern a structural homology among them, despite the formal difference between secular and religious occasions. They display a unity of concerns which hinges once again on the oppositions between backwardness and modernity, tradition and progress, *arretratezza* and *civiltà*.

There are four main elements, or stages that characterise each one. The fact that the PSI festival did not have all four can be largely explained by the party's lack of funds and support.

To begin with, there is in each case a procession. At one time, particularly in the religious festivals, this would have been the single most important event - hence the common local phrase: *"passato il santo, passato la festa"* - "once the saint has gone by, the festival's over". Today however, although still important, the procession does not stand out quite so clearly as central.

Secondly there is a 'stage' when a representative of the community gets up on a platform and speaks to and on behalf of the community. In the two religious ceremonies, this was in fact a Mass during which the priest gave a homily. In the secular festivals there were speeches - more elaborate in the case of the PCI.

The third element is constituted by the setting up of stalls selling food, drink and gifts. These form a constant, general background to the evenings events, providing people with something to do as they mill about in between the procession and the entertainment.

Fourthly and finally is the element that appears to have become the most important of them all - the entertainments laid on in the *piazza*, including fireworks, dancing, live bands and singers, films etc.

Thus even in the basic structuring of the *feste* there is a commonality of ideas about what constitutes the proper way of doing things. Breaking down the structure further it can be seen that the identity expressed in the first two elements is different from that expressed in the second two. In the former we see the identification with or expression of specific local traditions from a particular point of view, religious or secular/political. In the latter two elements religious and political specificities are submerged, together with local tradition, as the organisers lay on events that will appeal to everyone in the community whatever their political or religious allegiance. In

participating in these stages of the *festa*, people are identifying with a culture that goes far beyond the boundaries of the community.

In relation to our two poles of backwardness and modernity, and in particular in relation to tradition, this categorisation of the elements of the *feste* is extremely important. I would argue that in terms of the backward-modern classification and of people's self-positioning within this classification, the general, but not unequivocal, orientation of the *feste* is towards modernity

This is manifested in the varying degrees of self-reflection and self-consciousness that appear at the different stages. The basic point is that whereas 'tradition' is paraded, objectified, reflected upon, the culture in which people are 'immersed', which they take for granted is that represented in the background of stalls, toys, and above all in the imported entertainers. This is most clearly manifested in the *festa de l'Unità*. Although there is excitement about the entertainers and concern that they be as famous and modern as possible, this is not the naïve excitement of the uninitiated. On the contrary it is the excitement of people for whom national popular culture is part of their everyday lives.

On the other hand, when we turn to look at the *pacchiane* and the speech that followed it, we see that people are not so much parading in a traditional manner with traditional things, but rather *parading tradition*. The traditional costume is a museum piece, an artefact, and in reflecting upon it in this manner there was a process of distancing from, rather than identifying with, this tradition. This can be seen even more clearly in the *giorno alla Fratta*. On this occasion local 'tradition' was subject to much the same treatment as it received (and receives regularly) at the hands of the core - as we will see in the next chapter. What people were doing on this occasion, in my view, was taking up a position of *distance* from their tradition, gazing at it, in effect, 'constructing' it; and in doing so they revealed that this culture was in a sense, no longer theirs.

Further evidence for this interpretation comes from other examples of people's reflection on the past at Grotta. One in particular that stands out is the example of a school photographic exhibition in the Social Centre. The theme of the exhibition was *"il mondo dei nostri nonni"* - "the world of our grandfathers", a phrase we have already encountered. The photographs were of peasants at work, of obsolete agricultural tools, of horse- or donkey-drawn carts and ploughs, of artisan products. The whole display was put up on hessian boards inside the Centre and parents came with their children to look at them.

What it is essential to recognise in all of this is that children were being educated into a particular way of reconstructing and appropriating the past. In doing so, however, the past does *not*, paradoxically, become part of them, it is not embodied. They do not accept it but rather *reject* it and in practice the culture that is espoused and accepted is that embodied in the display boards; in the camera which took the pictures, 'capturing' the past in the texture of tools or of a face; in the school which teaches them to look at the peasant past in this way, putting it behind them, locked in photographs.

Carnevale

So far no mention has been made of one of the main festivals of the year - *carnevale* - held usually in February, prior to Lent. Traditionally this is a festival of excess before submission to the strictures of Lent. It is a time, people say, when *ogni scherzo vale* - any joke goes. In the past it was said that people used the costume and masks which characterise the festival towards violent ends: superiors and despotic landlords would be insulted, assaulted, taken to task. Some spoke of shootings. Vengeance would be taken on enemies and townsfolk would take the opportunity to demonstrate further their antipathy towards the peasants by touring the countryside stealing from them or at least demanding food. It was considered bad luck to refuse such demands.

All of this however, describes *Carnevale* in the past. Today, while it is certainly an important occasion for a great deal of merriment, celebration, ribaldry and 'high jinks', it does not seem to have the same symbolic significance as in the past. Few seemed to associate it with the oncoming of Lent, nor was it tinged with the same threat of violence, except from a certain 'hooligan' element among some male adolescents. There were rumours that some of them had thrown dangerous objects (including, for example, oranges 'loaded' with razor blades) into the crowds of revellers in the streets.

On the days leading up to *Carnevale* one of the most common sounds in the streets was the exceptionally loud bang of firecrackers. These were set off by boys from the age of about eight upwards and thrown at the feet of passers by and people sitting outside bars. The bang would elicit laughter from onlookers and fright followed by anger from the unlucky victims. There was excited and secretive talk, particularly among the young about what they intended to do on the night. Shops and market stalls were full of stocks of fireworks, masks and costumes.

During the day there was a children's masquerade, oganised by some school teachers. This was an event in which those who participated were largely of the *ceto*

medio. There was a competition to decide who had the best costume and mask. Some parents, again of the middle class, took their children to an organised *carnevale* 'event' in a school hall in Avellino. Again they were dressed up to take part in a competition and there was also a play staged for them. Both of these events were of recent origin. They were *not* community events and seemed to be somewhat contrived, lacking in the spontaneity that characterised some of the other festivals. It was as if, like the *pacchiane*, no-one was quite sure about what to do other than dress up.

The evening masquerade was very much a matter for the whole town. There was no official procession but just a gradual congregation of people in the *piazza* and along *il Corso* for an extra-special *passeggiata*. Those who dressed up were young. Older people looked on at the spectacle. Among the costumes were Arabs, priests and monks, clowns, animals, old men with grotesque faces, witches etc. However, the most common ones were caricatures of national and international politicians: Craxi, the then Prime Minister, Berlinguer (the recently deceased leader of the PCI, Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher. These are evidence once again of the everyday concerns of local people at Grotta and of the images with which they are familiar. In addition it is evidence of the appropriation of local culture by the core. These masks, mass-produced and sold all over Italy for the same purpose, were the most popular among those participating and watching. Many talked of procuring them for the following year. At the same time some older people claimed that all the fun and art of disguise had gone out of the festival; that it was much better when people made their own masks, or better still when they became quite unrecognisable merely by painting their faces.

'Core' Festivals

The last group of festivals that I wish to consider here are the national, secular festivals that fall in the course of the year: *il giorno della madre* (Mother's Day), *il giorno del padre* (Father's Day), *la festa delle donne* (Women's Day), San Valentino etc. All of these occasions are big media and commercial events in which whoever is being celebrated (father, mother, woman, lover) is given an appropriate gift - these were always precisely the items advertised on television in the days leading up to the respective *feste*: men were given bottles of *Chivas Regal* whisky or *Stock* brandy; women were given flowers (mimosa on women's day, roses for Valentine's day) and chocolates (particularly a brand called *Baci* (i.e. 'kisses'). Only on Woman's Day was there any kind of organised activity. This involved a one-off debate held in the *piazza* by the PCI although few people took part and few regarded the day in terms of the advancement of the feminist cause. On the contrary, like the other three 'days' it tended to reinforce the

traditional division of sexual roles. This was emphasised in the advertising - images of contented fathers sitting smoking a pipe and being brought a gift of whisky or liquor by a loving daughter; or images of women receiving flowers or perfume from an admirer or lover.

Mention should also be made of the increased attention to and significance of intermittent festivals and celebrations in which people participate directly through the media (as Italians). Some of these have already been mentioned in previous sections - the San Remo pop music festival, highly publicised concerts by international pop stars - Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Wonder, Sting; the Band Aid concert etc.

All of these 'core' festivals are increasingly significant in people's everyday lives at the local level. What conclusions can be drawn regarding this situation? The implication is that local culture is in the process of being completely submerged by the core. However, the images of lifestyles presented to people by the core, particularly via the media, do not necessarily or explicitly undermine values they hold at a local level. Rather they often 'work' precisely by accommodating these values. An Italian sociologist, referring to the effect on the South of core culture, or as he describes it, the *cultura del profitto*, says:

> *La cultura del profitto ... deve indurre al cambiamento ma rassicurare che non è un totale cambiamento, deve condurre al futuro ma deve anche proteggere da esso*
>
> The culture of profit ... must induce change but ensure that the change is not total, it must lead to the future, but also protect against it.
>
> (Lombardi-Satriani, L. 1973: 112)

In a similar vein, Richard Hoggart, in his classic study The *Uses of Literacy*, describes working-class culture in England in the 1950's:

> What have been called the 'older' attitudes and those now to be discussed [i.e. the 'newer' attitudes] can be found at the same time in the same people. Changes in attitudes work their way very slowly through many aspects of social life. They are incorporated into existing attitudes and often seem, at first, to be only freshly presented forms of these 'older' attitudes. Individuals can therefore inhabit more than one 'mental climate' without conscious strain. Though the nature of the old order may be more immediately evident in middle-aged people, the newer appeals obviously touch them also. Conversely, a young man who seems at first almost completely typical of the second half of this century will reveal attitudes which recall his Great Grandfather. It follows that the success of the more powerful contemporary approaches is partly decided by the extent to which they can identify themselves with the 'older' attitudes
>
> (Hoggart, R. 1957: 138)

Although he is referring to an apparently very different context, his remarks are nevertheless relevant. In contemporary anthropology a popular approach in discussing the relationship between core and periphery is to describe the ways in which local people appropriate the symbols of a dominant culture to their own local beliefs and attitudes. In this way they have attempted to escape the interpretation of a monolithic and homogenising core imposing itself upon, swamping the periphery, and thus as Cohen puts it, displaying "the integrity of cultures" (Cohen, A.P.1986: 16).

However, in my view it is not necessary to adopt either of these poles. Certainly, it is legitimate to recognise the ways in which local people adapt new ideas to their own way of life. But it is equally, if not more, important to recognise the opposite and far more powerful process whereby the core appropriates the ideas of the periphery and thus transforms it - not in any crude homogenising fashion, but with subtlety. Both Hoggart and Lombardi-Satriani acknowledge this and the examples provided above demonstrate it to some extent.

Thus the images presented to people, particularly through the media and in the market, but also in other walks of life, do not necessarily or immediately undermine local values. But they do tend to set limits to the way in which such values are expressed. In the process, people on the periphery are incorporated into a wider arena of meanings - and an arena in which they occupy a subordinate position.

4. North and South in Everyday Life

4.1. Introduction

In this section I want to turn now to look at people's sense of place as expressed in their attitudes and actions towards the North and northerners - in other words at their identity as southerners. The division between North and South has been implicit in the whole discussion so far. It is essential to an understanding of people's attitudes and identity in relation to modernity since in the dominant classification, modernity is synonymous with the North.

However, as yet, there has been little discussion of explicit attitudes towards the North and northerners. Although people recognise themselves as southerners and are definitely and almost entirely negatively defined as such by northerners, there is little institutionalised southern identity. There is no 'Southern Nationalist Party' or other organisation or institution which sets itself in opposition to the North and contests the

North's representations of the South, or offers a collective, positive self-image of the South.

There are many historical, political, economic and cultural reasons for this situation, some of which will have emerged already. Not least among these is the nature of political organisation which historically has involved vertical linkages of individual towns to a centralised state. This has helped to reproduce the powerful *campanilismo* present at local level and which is carefully exploited by politicians in the maintenance of their support base. Related to this situation, the cultural differences between the regions of the South is sufficient to prevent them uniting as 'southerners'.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that despite this lack of a positive self-representation and the tendency of southerners to try to *become* modern, there is a common animosity towards the North and northerners when they are actually brought face to face with them or their attitudes.

4.2. Hot and Cold Societies

For the most part people at Grotta would describe their actions and attitudes as either Grottesi or Italian - these were the two poles of their identification with location.

Nevertheless, there were situations in which the difference was explicitly recognised. Sometimes this was merely in response to my questioning; at other times opinions and attitudes would emerge among people discussing holidays or experiences of emigration or, occasionally, items of news in the media. As well, there were a number of northerners living at Grotta and their relations with the Grottesi further contribute to the understanding of people's sense of place.

In Chapters 2 and 3 we saw the kind of images of the South that have developed through history and it was shown that these images have been perpetuated right up to the present, particularly in the media. Headlines like "Continued backwardness of the South hampers development" would appear in news items. Documentaries would describe the "ancient lethargy" of the South and portray whitewashed mountain villages with old peasant men and women sitting around watching time go by; films would show incompetent southerners living in northern cities. Southerners would be described as small dark and *hot* as opposed to tall, fair and *cold.*

As we will see shortly and in the next chapter, this hot/cold distinction is one which plays an important part in Grottesi sense of place and identity. First of all

however, I will describe the attitudes of northerners living in Grotta towards local people.

4.2.1. Northerners at Grotta

The few northern families living at Grotta immediately latched onto me as an ally with whom they had a natural affinity and could share their antipathy to the ways and attitudes of the Grottesi. Any mention made by me of any aspect of local life or local people, no matter how innocuous would be regarded as a opportunity for finding fault with them.

In a conversation with a woman from Genoa, the widow of a man from a neighbouring town, mention of the lambs displayed on rails outside the butchers' shops produced a disdainful and disgusted response:

> *Si lo so, fa schifo! Vive nell'anno di Cristo questa gente.*
>
> Yes I know, its horrible! They're living in the age of Christ these people.

On another occasion I mentioned to her the fact that people's first question on greeting you in the street was *"Addo' vai?"* - "Where are you going?". I had intended only to point out that this was contrary to my expectations of the more usual *come stai?*- how are you?. However, again she launched into an invective against the locals - this time in English (she had lived in England for 18 years)

> Yes the people here are very boring. Its the same thing every day. Nothing ever happens.

Another aspect of the local character that came under attack was their attitude towards the family. This same woman said she could not stand the way in which local people sacrificed everything for their children, especially at marriage. It was unhealthy because it stifled their independence and meant that they were unable to stand up for themselves. Another northern couple complained about the number of children local people had, how they were obsessed with children and did not think about planning their families:

> *Il paese è così. Però noi abbiamo aspettato prima di avere Francesca*
>
> The town is like that. But we waited before having Francesca

For some, the Grottesi were jealous and backbiting. The Genoan woman said that she knew they talked about her but she did not give a damn: "I just get on with my own

life and do what I want. I don't harm anyone". Others were outraged at the way the Grottese 'distorted' correct Italian:

> *Non sanno parlare correttamente e il peggio è che a scuola i professori parlano dialetto. E` uno scandalo! Come fanno le mie figlie in un ambiente così arretrato*
>
> They can't speak properly and the worst thing is that at school the teachers speak dialect. It's a scandal. How can my daughters get on in such a backward environment

Another anxious northerner told me that he had complained about this to the authorities. And in a conversation about the development of the South, and of Grotta, he said:

> *Non ce n'è. E il problema è questo: qui la gente le piace passeggiare sotto il sole, le piace andare al mare in estate. Non s'interessa del lavoro. Fa comodo al governo. Ogni tanto mette una fabbrica e la gente sta contenta - fa comodo anche alla gente - deve solamente aspettare per i contributi di stato*
>
> There isn't any. And the problem is this: here people like to walk up and down beneath the sun, to go to the seaside in the summer. They're not interested in work. It suits the government fine. Every now and then open a factory and the people are happy. It suits the people too - they just have to wait for hand-outs from the state.

This man had been a manager of a new factory that had been set up shortly after the arrival of Fiat. It had failed however, after an attempt by the workers to take over the management rather than be managed by the North. For him this was an indication of the immaturity of the area and the continued backwardness of the local mentality. In general he found little to recommend Grotta or the South. Even the cities of the North were terrible: *"sono pieni di meridionali!"* - "they're full of southerners!".

It can be seen then, that the incoming northerners find little good in the local population. In fact almost every conversation I had with them contained some deprecatory reference to the locals and was peppered with words like *arretrato, incivile, maleducati.*

4.2.2. The Grottese response

In order to discuss the Grottese response to these representations it is not necessary to discuss their specific reactions to these particular northerners. However, some such cases did come to light. One in particular is revealing of the Grottese sense of place in relation to the northerners.

On going to visit the Genoan woman when her husband died - *"per consolarla, come facciamo qui"* ("to console her, as we do here") - some local women were turned away at the door. For her, the visit was insensitive and provoked by nosiness and the locals' propensity for gossip. For the Grottesi women however, it was an affront to their hospitality and further confirmation that she was *cattiva* - a bad lot.

The confrontation is an important one because it illustrates very clearly one area in which Grottese will not accept the values of the North. In turning them away she epitomised the *freddezza* - coldness - of the North. When it was discovered that I had spoken to her, people warned me off vehemently:

> *Non parla con nessuno, è fredda. Noi andavamo a trovarla quando è morto il marito, per consolarla, farla pensare di altre cose - così facciamo qui. Ci mandava via. Volevamo aiutare, come amici. Qui se uno non accetta l'amicizia che si offre non si parla più. Così facciamo qui , quindi non devi parlare con lei - è cattiva!*
>
> She doesn't speak to anyone, she's cold. We went to visit her when her husband died, to console her, to make her think of other things - that's what we do here. She sent us away. We wanted to help, like friends. Here if someone doesn't accept friendship that is offered, you don't speak to them anymore. That's how we do things here, so you musn't speak to her - she's a bad lot.

In all her actions and attitudes towards the Grottesi in fact, she tended to live up to the northern stereotype. To "not give a damn about what people say"; to "just get on with my own life" is to be precisely what local people hated about the North: aloof, unfriendly, inhospitable, uncaring, unsociable, in a word, *cold*:

E` cattiva gente lì sopra, sono freddi. Tutti fanno i fatti loro. Non pensano agli altri, non ti nemmeno salutano - neanche un 'buongiorno' la mattina. Invece qui siamo più calorosi. Stiamo sempre in giro con gli amici, andiamo a trovarli; e i vicini si aiutano

They're bad people up there, they're cold. They all mind their own business [i.e. in a negative sense]. They don't think of others, they don't even say hello - not even a 'good morning'. But here we're much warmer. We're always out and about with our friends, visiting them; and neighbours help each other out.

Just as the northerners regarded backwardness and incivility as inherent characteristics of Grottesi, so the latter found coldness in the actions and attitudes of the North and northerners. It was perceived in their whole person - including bodily characteristics. they were said to be like Germans and Austrians - tall, frequently blonde, with harsh accents. Sometimes they would mimic them - stand stiff and erect, put on a hard, severe face. The physical characteristics were supposed to capture mental attitudes - aloofness, distance, coldness.

The *freddezza* of the North was also illustrated by pointing to their attitudes towards the family. The following makes interesting comparison with the northern description of Grottesi attitudes in this sphere:

Per loro la famiglia non importa. A diciotto anni i figli se ne vanno da casa. Qui no! si sta sempre in famiglia.

For them the family doesn't matter. At eighteen, children leave home. Here, no! One is always part of the family.

This distance also came out in people's reactions to some news items where for example, children had been abused or parents divorced. Even when this kind of thing was reported to have happened in the South, the North was blamed indirectly as a corrupting influence. This influence was a common theme among emigrants talking about the North during their holidays back in Grotta:

Son tutti meridionali dove stiamo noi. Però col tempo hanno imparato i modo di vita della gente lì. Adesso anche loro sono freddi, fanno i fatti suoi.

They're all southerners where we live, but with time they've learnt the ways of the people there. Now they are cold too and think only of themselves.

Another common theme among emigrants was resentment of the way in which northerners represented them:

Non è vero che siamo pigri. Gli emigranti da qui hanno fatti tanti sacrifici, hanno lavorato tanto - per che cosa? Niente. Sono quelli

milanesi che hanno fatti i soldi. Si sentono superiori. Dicono che tutti noi siamo inferiori, però si son fatti ricchi sui nostri pelli.

Its not true that we're lazy. Emigrants from here have sacrificed a great deal , they've worked hard, and for what? Nothing. Its those Milanesi who have made the money. They think they're superior. They say that we're all inferior, but they've got rich on our backs.

Others also pointed to what they regarded as the fallacy of the laziness of southerners. The failure of industry to take hold in the south was nothing to do with the mentality of the workers as northerners so often portray it:

perchè questi stessi lavoratori si sono emigrati al estero, e al Nord d'Italia e hanno lavorato tantissimo. Non è una questione di mentalità

because these same workers have emigrated abroad and to North Italy and they have worked extremely hard. Its not a question of mentality.

These then, are the main ways in which the Grottesi reject the stereotype of the northerners towards them. However, it would be mistaken to suppose that here we have two completely opposed perspectives, running along parallel lines with the southerners maintaining and cultivating the boundary with the North just as much as vice versa. This should be apparent from the preceding chapters where we have shown that people's sense of place in relation to the modern world is often an uneasy one in which they are anxious to dissociate themselves from their own background and yet are not accepted in the milieu into to which they are trying to integrate themselves. In the same way then, many people's explicit attitudes towards the North and northerners are not oppositional and frequently, even where they reject the North's representation of them, they still accept its basis. (c.f. Fofi 1964: 250ff)

Hence people *were* to be found agreeing with the northern images of the South. One man who ran a small business at Grotta frequently criticised his fellow townsfolk for their laziness:

Qui nel Sud, non c'è volontà di faticare. Tutti vogliono l'impiego. Così possono lavorare quattro ore al giorno fino a mezzogiorno e poi tornare a casa, mangiare e fare la nanna.

Here in the South there's not the will to work. Everyone wants a white-collar job so that they can work four hours a day until midday and then go home, eat and have a nap.

He blamed the young in particular for this kind of attitude. The latter for their part generally agreed that life in the North would be much better. They exchanged stories of friends or relatives who worked in the North, relishing the things you were able

to do, the constraints you did not have. There was more freedom, you could be yourself and not have to worry about gossip or being tied to the family. The terms that were constantly used to refer to Grotta and the South, were *arretrato, incivile.*

In a long conversation about North and South, a young man rejected the image of southerners as backward by saying that northerners got their impressions from a minority of southerners who

> *non sanno comportarsi bene - sono ubriachi, chiassosi - fanno un grande rumore tutta la notte, mettendo dischi di rock'n'roll, non sanno vestirsi, mettono i pomodori nel bagno invece di bagnarsi ecetera. C'è molto ignoranza anche tra i contadini di Grotta, però non tutti sono così*
>
> don't know how to behave themselves - they're drunken, noisy - they play loud rock music all night, they don't know how to dress, they grow tomatoes in the bath instead of washing in it[1]. There is a great deal of ignorance, even among the peasants of Grotta, but not everyone is like that

He went on to give examples of northerners who on visiting Grotta had been greatly surprised at how *evoluto* the town was and that everyone was not a *cafone.*

It is clear from this example, which was in fact typical of many people, that although he rejects the northern image on one level, he accepts it on another. He accepts both the idea of backwardness as defined by the core, and the rather patronising assessment of the northern visitors - 'so you're not all backward after all'.

4.3. Summary

A wide range of contexts in which the Grottesi define their identity have been described in this chapter. It has moved from local self-image expressed through history, geography, rivalry with other towns, festivals and tradition, to the wider identity of people as southerners. All of these expressions have in common that they involve people in 'parading' their identity. However, the identity that they parade is not always, or exclusively, what they intend to parade. Grottesi define themselves by positioning themselves within the dominant classification of backwardness and modernity. As a result of the fact that within this classification they have *already* been assigned a position by the core, their room for manoeuvre is limited. They can attempt to situate themselves and their town within the discourse of modernity - whether in terms of history

[1] This is a common image of southerners living in the cities of the North, encapsulating their reputed incometence when faced with even the most basic trappings of a modern lifestyle

or development - but not without risk, not without accepting that they are not accepted as modern by the core.

In the festivals the overall orientation was towards modernity, even as people sought to identify themselves with local tradition. The parading, objectifying and reflecting upon tradition were, in my view, acts which revealed people's *distance* from tradition. The culture in which they were immersed, to which they had been - not unequivocally appropriated - was the culture of the core. Hence the ready participation in certain core events and festivals and familiarity with the core definition of their own tradition.

As stressed, it is not necessary to choose between the poles of a homogenising core and a periphery that retains its integrity by transforming and adapting the meanings of the core towards its own ends. Rather, it must be recognised that the the latter process only goes on in the context of an asymmetric relationship in which the core is immeasurably more powerful.

CHAPTER TEN
Il Buon Paese

1. Introduction.

During my stay in Grottaminarda, a series of events, a social drama, occurred which helped to crystalise all of my thoughts on the nature of the town's relationship with the core, particularly in terms of images and representations. Although all the implications of these events took some time to be teased out, I knew at the time that they would become a kind of 'master key' for the whole thesis. The object of this chapter then, is to present an interpretation of what happened. The events constituted an 'encounter' between core and periphery. The relationship between them was *inscribed, embodied* in these events. It was a kind of mini-ideological battle in which it was possible to observe the exchange, imposition and appropriation of ideas, the creation of images and reproduction of stereotypes and hence, the reproduction of the relationship. People's sense of place, their identity within the arena of North-South relations was observable not only in what they did and said, but rather was *physically embodied* in their relative positions and attitudes - and in using the word attitude here I intend it in its fullest sense - indicating *posture* and *disposition* as well as the colloquial sense of opinion or attitude of mind.

So, to the social drama. Grotta was chosen to take part in a television quiz-cum-variety show called *il Buon Paese* - (the Good Town) which was subsequently broadcast on a private national TV station at peak viewing time. The TV company was called Rete Quattro (literally Channel Four) which is one of three major private stations owned by Silvio Berlusconi. Berlusconi is one of Italy's big business barons along with Agnelli of Fiat and De Benedetti. During my stay in Italy, Berlusconi purchased one of Italy's top football teams, A.C. Milan. He is in constant battle with *RAI*, - Italian State television, whose privileges according to him, do not allow his private stations to compete on an equal basis.

Berlusconi's vision

Berlusconi's vision, which guides many of the productions on these channels, is the stereotypical *Italia allegra* - a happy country full of joy and a passion for life. All three stations are blatantly commercial. Programmes are liberally interspersed with advertising and there are no news bulletins - just one great round of entertainment consisting of (mostly American) soaps, serials and films - Starsky and Hutch, the Bionic Woman, the Dukes of Hazzard, Little House on the Prairie. Each of these is shown on one or other

channel *daily*. In addition to these are new the breed of Japanese cartoons, the characters from which are heavily marketed as children's toys throughout the country. As mentioned in Chapter Six, these cartoons have been shown to be little more than prolonged advertisements for these toys. Finally there are 'Variety Extravaganzas' - spectacular variety shows with famous personalities, quizzes, song and dance, 'gorgeous girls' and a great deal of glitter and lights. It is in these variety shows that the image of *Italia allegra* is most pronounced. and it was in such a show that Grotta was chosen to take part.

An example of daily viewing on Berlusconi's three private channels

RETE QUATTRO

8.30 Grande Vallata (telefilm)
9.15 Fra' Diavolo (")
11.00 Strega per amore (")
11.30 Giorno per giorno (")
12.00 La piccola grande nell (")
12.30 Vicini troppi vicini (")
13.00 Ciao Ciao (children's programmes)
14.30 La valle dei pini (soap)
15.30 Così gira il mondo (")
16.15 Il Santo (telefilm)
17.15 Aspettando il domani (soap)
18.15 C'est la vie (quiz game)
18.45 Gioco delle coppie (")
19.30 Quincy (telefilm)
20.30 OK. Il prezzo è giusto (quiz game)
22.30 Film
00.20 Shannon (telefilm)
01.10 Il Santo (")

CANALE CINQUE

07.00 Buongiorno Italia (previews)
07.20 The littlest (cartoon)
07.45 Pepero (")
08.10 News
08.30 Parliamone (chat show)
09.28 Buongiorno Italia
09.30 General Hospital (soap)
10.30 Cantando cantando (music show)
11.15 Tuttinfamiglia (quiz game)
12.00 Bis (game hosted by top personality)
12.45 Il pranzo è servito (")
13.30 Sentieri (play)
14.30 Fantasia (game)
15.00 Film
17.30 Doppio Slalom (children's quiz)
18.00 Ciao Enrica (phone-in)
20.00 Tra moglie e marito (game)
20.30 Film
22.30 Speciali News (documentary)
23.15 Maurizio Costanza Show (Variety show)
00.30 Premiere (trailers for next week's films)

ITALIA UNO

08.30 L'uomo da sei milioni di dollari
09.15 Wonder Woman
10.00 Tarzan
11.00 Cannon
12.00 Agenzia Rockford
12.55 Tre cuori in affitto
13.25 Smile
13.35 M.A.S.H.
14.20 Deejay television (pop videos)
15.05 La Famiglia Addams
15.30 Bim Bum Bam (children's programme)
18.00 Star Trek
19.00 Starsky and Hutch
20.00 Teneramente Licia (cartoon)
20.30 A-Team
21.30 Riptide
22.30 Ciak ... si gira (film preview)
23.30 Film
01.45 La Strana Coppia

Source: *La Repubblica* 9.10.87

The programme, *il Buon Paese*, was a knock-out competition between towns from all over Italy to see which of them best extolled the virtues of all that is Italy: the homely, the traditional, the typical, the idiosyncratic and extraordinary.

A short film was made of each town and a family group was chosen to go to the studios in Rome to participate in the competition together with the local mayor and a handful of local heroes and heroines who were particularly adept at some aspect of the

quiz. The prizes for winning, apart from moving to the next round, were fairly substantial sums of money for public works. In between rounds of the competition there were various interviews and entertainments. National personalities appeared, and 'ordinary people', engaged in what were regarded as particularly admirable or enterprising activities were presented.

Grotta's participation in the programme can be divided into two parts:

1. The making of the cameo of life at Grotta, or, 'the core comes to the periphery'

2. The recording of the show in Rome, or, 'the periphery goes to the core'

I will present an account of both of these stages and then return to each one to interpret the events.

2. The Core comes to the Periphery

In October 1985, a film crew arrived from Milan to make their cameo of life at Grotta. There were three of them - a *regista* (director), an interviewer and a cameraman. They were met by one of the local councillors from the new administration who had been organising the event locally, arranging who was to take part. A small crowd gathered at *La Fratta*, the area where most of the filming was to take place. *La Fratta* is the only remaining section of the original mediæval *borgo* - the old town centre. The rest was abandoned after the earthquake of 1962 and demolished after that of 1980. Most of the houses were single roomed hovels and are now tumble-down and overgrown and inhabited only by cats. The roofs of most have caved in and the walls are split by lesions and cracks.

The dictionary definition of *La Fratta* is *"luogo impervio per sterpi e prugni"* or "place inaccessible due to thorny undergrowth". This is in keeping with the local image of the area as the poorest, dingiest and most insanitary part of town. It is also however, the seat of tradition and is thought to embody many of the characteristics of the town's past. It was thus perhaps an inevitable choice for the making of the film.

In amongst the local people, the film crew stood out, not merely because they were strangers and therefore the focus of attention, but also because of their different appearance and demeanour. Their clothes were sophisticated and stylish, they walked and carried themselves in a different manner, seeming aloof. The *regista* left the local councillor and the interviewer to do most of the organising. She stood apart with her

designer clothes and Ray Ban sunglasses pushed casually onto her forehead with no sign of ostentation or affectation.

The Chairmaker

Filming began with a short interview with the councillor as he and the interviewer walked down the narrow streets of *La Fratta* and into a small *piazza*. He spoke of the area as *"il mondo dei nostri nonni"* - the world of our grandfathers ...

- Does anyone still live in that way?, asked the interviewer.

- No, replied the councillor, *è un mondo quasi scomparso* - it's a world that's almost disappeared.

- *Quasi?* - Almost?, asked the interviewer rhetorically, and as the camera panned onto his face he said, full of smiling curiosity, *Vediamo che cosa c'è dietro quest'angolo* - Let's see what's round this corner.

At that point the scene ended and they began to prepare for the next. A man in his 60's was brought forward and sat down on a stool in front of an abandoned house with a small chair and some bundles of straw. He was dressed in well-worn trousers tied with string and had a red face and hands gnarled and horny with arthritis and age. He was known locally as *Michele lu Surd'* - or Deaf Michael. At the signal of the film crew he began weaving the straw into the seat of the chair - he was a skilled *seggiolaio* or chairmaker. Several times they stopped to adjust his hands and the position of his head. Then, as the interviewer came round the corner, following from the previous scene, the camera rolled again and stumbling upon this poor but happy artisan he asked

- *Scusi signore, quante sedie ha fatto nella sua vita?*
- Excuse me sir, how many chairs have you made in your life?

Michele smiled and blushed as his friends and neighbours watched him with amusement. He began to wave his hands in the air in a gesture indicating a rough estimate and said, long before the microphone had reached his lips:

- Beh, non lo so, diciamo, circa quatt' cinq' mila, più o meno, quatt', cinq' insomma
- Eh, I don't know, lets say, about four or five thousand, more or less, four or five thousand, roundabout

CUT! Vedi, dici "quattro-cinque mila" e basta. *E non parlare finquando il microfono non stia alla bocca*
- CUT! Look, just say "four or five thousand" and that's *enough*. And don't speak until the microphone is at your mouth.

The presenter took up his position again and the cameras rolled for take two:

- scusa signore, quante sedie ha fatto nella sua vita?

Michele screwed up his face and cupped his hand to his ear saying:

- Come?
- Pardon?

- CUT!

Being slightly deaf, Michele had not heard the question properly and had not assumed that he would be asked the same again. The crowd were in stitches laughing and when they saw the camera crew getting annoyed, they laughed even more. At the next take, Michele made a grab for the microphone and looked directly at the camera as he answered. The film was cut again amidst more hilarity from the onlookers. After several more takes, more, increasingly tetchy, instructions from the interviewer and more comments and laughing from those watching, they managed to proceed to the next question.

Leave it to the experts

And so it went on, with the film crew asking the questions and dictating the answers if they were not satisfactory. Other 'local characters' and 'traditional craftsmen' were interviewed as they carried out their supposedly daily tasks. A wine barrel was set up and a peasant filmed as he pressed grapes with his feet. His posture was adjusted, his arms moved and head raised until they were 'correct' for the camera. Finally, a traditional oxen-pulled cart was procured for the event and was filmed as it drew slowly up a tree-lined avenue and into the *piazza*. Obtaining the oxen and cart had been quite a task for the councillor, involving many phone calls and a great deal of persuasion.

Various local people tried to make independent contributions to the film, enthusiastically presenting various traditional games to the director. These were each quietly rejected with a rather tired smile on her part. Eventually she got so fed up with the 'interference' that she asked the councillor to make an announcement telling people to just watch, keep out of the way and leave the construction of the film to the experts.

Meanwhile a group of Grottesi, at the request of the councillor, had dressed up as *Le Pacchiane*. They had spent the previous evening practising and for them, this ought to be the most important aspect of a film about the town's traditions. They waited in a side alley to be called upon. Eventually the waiting became too much and they danced into the *piazza* led by the accordionist and banging tambourines. However, this was yet another annoyance for the *regista* and their appearance was cancelled indefinitely.

Fireworks

The next day, more filming was carried out and some attempt was made to characterise the 'modern' aspects of the town. Some owners of small industries were interviewed. The Socialist vice-mayor was interviewed in the *campagna* about his tobacco business and the importance of tobacco to the community. Brief interviews were held with local *commericianti* in the street. They gave the typical response to questions about their town:

> *La gente è molto ospitale. Persone chi vengono qui da fuori non vogliono andarsene più.*
>
> The people are so hospitable. Outsiders who come here never want to leave.

The final section of the film was again taken in *La Fratta*. The whole town was invited to take part in a bonfire and firework display. A local electric company had been commissioned to rig up a message in lights: *"un abbraccio a tutti i paesi del mondo"* - "An embrace to all the towns of the world". *Le Pacchiane* were dressed up again and ready to perform. As the crowd gathered, the present-day *notabili* - the ex-mayor and his Christian democrat allies - were noticeable by their absence.

The people who had gathered were asked to wave and cheer. *Le Pacchiane* danced in the foreground beside the bonfire. However, the cameras were focussed on the waving arms and the message in lights in the background. In a brief exchange the interviewer said to the councillor:

> *So che ai meridionali piaciono i fuochi d'artifici. Pensa che vedremo qualcuno sta sera?*
> I know that southerners like fireworks. D'you think we'll see some tonight?
>
> *Forse si*
> Perhaps yes.

After a pause a few fireworks went off. And that was it. The crew thanked everyone and began to pack their equipment and leave. A few people lingered in the

piazza talking and smoking. Some took the opportunity to turn the occasion into a mini-festa, dancing and singing round the fire accompanied by the accordionist and tambourines.

From the complete selection of interviewees and participants a great deal was cut out in the editing process and the final version lasted all of three minutes. All the awkward, unwanted footage was removed. There were no boisterous spectators, no awkward pauses, no visible irritation. Just the smiling face of the kindly presenter interviewing the local characters. The overwhelming emphasis was on the huddled houses of *La Fratta* and the archaic ways of its inhabitants. [1]

Let us turn now to the second episode of the story.

3. The Periphery Goes to the Core

The Bus to Rome

At 6 am on a cold November morning, a crowd of noisy Grottesi together with resident anthropologist, boarded a bus for Rome to go and support their town team in the studios of *Rete Quattro*, competing to become *il Buon Paese.* The contestants had gone on ahead three days previously for rehearsals. They included a 'typical' Grottesi family who ran a general grocers in the town, the mayor, a *sapiente* or scholar who would take part in a 'mastermind'-type quiz, a hairstylist, an expert in billiards and a group of local entertainers.

In opposition to the putatively 'traditional' characters who participated in the film, everyone who went to the studios, from participants to supporters, was from the local middle class of shopkeepers, town clerks, teachers and other professionals - not a peasant in sight. They had all made some effort to dress up for the occasion. Some voiced, others displayed a certain self-consciousness about going to Rome and appearing on national television. One man, who in his home lifestyle possessed all the trappings of modernity

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[1] This is not to mention those who refused to take part in the making of the film, who ignored it completely or who knew nothing about it. One local producer of the sweet *torrone* - (a kind of nougat) declared that the television people were only out to make a false image of the town:

Si fa una brutta figura. E` 'na fesseria 'sta television'. Ti fanno dire quello che ti vogliono dire. Mettono le parole in bocca

You'd make a fool of yourself. It's a farce this television thing. They make you say what they want. They put words into your mouth.

They had wanted to film his business as a traditional industry. However, as he pointed out, it could only with difficulty be described as traditional. The process was almost entirely mechanised, the ingredients were all imported and the premises were in a newly constructed reinforced concrete building.

(new car, hi-fi, video camera, expensive furniture) and who was well-versed in current issues (being, for example, a vociferous opponent of clientelism and corruption, racism and religious prejudice), expressed nervousness about going to Rome, never having been there before. At the other end of the spectrum was the over-sophistication of the woman who ran the town's artists studio. As mentioned in the previous chapter, she was a rather aloof character, seeming to regard herself as more sophisticated than the rest of the population. Before recording began, everyone went for a meal in a nearby restaurant. The proprietors had been told to expect us and had prepared a set meal which they proceeded to serve up. Most people sat down and began to eat with gusto. However, the artist,accompanied by her fiancé arrived at the restaurant, having travelled in their own car and not on the coach. She was dressed in an extremely scanty bright green tube-like dress, extremely high stilletoes and an extremely short white fur jacket and white lace gloves (it was, after, all November), very conspicuously demanded to order her meal *alla carta*, saying indignantly *"non mangiamo questa roba"* - "we don't eat this stuff". Her action produced embarrassment and exasperation from the rest of the group at her assumption of a superior air and jokes and comments about her began to circulate.

The studio

At around 2.30pm, everyone filed into one side of a U-shaped arrangement of bright blue plastic seats, in the middle of which was the studio floor with several cameras and a host of studio staff. Above the audience, on either side of the corridor from which the show's presenter would appear, were the names of the two competing towns in flashing lights and a neon score counter.

Before recording began, final preparations were made and people allowed to settle in. Several models had been hired to sit in prominent places in the audience and look gorgeous in tight-fitting dresses, 'Dallas'-type hair-dos and a great deal of make-up[2]. Certain members of the audience who were deemed to be sufficiently glamorous were also given high-profile positions. The only member of the Grottesi contingent chosen was the local artist whose leg- and breast-revealing dress was thought to make her suitable material for viewers. Her discomfort was obvious and was compounded by the vocal derision of her fellow townsfolk.

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[2]These were not in fact professional models but young hopefuls who occasionally obtained such work. They queued all morning hoping to be chosen and provided all their own clothing and make-up to receive, at the end of a long day, a very small fee of £lt20 000 (less than £10).

Stereotypes in the flesh

The recording began with the prompter getting everyone to smile and clap to provide footage for the periods on either side of the numerous commercial breaks. This was all that happened for the first hour and so, while they were waiting, the Grottesi began to size up their opponents on the other side of the U-shape. It was quickly discovered that they were from a small town in north-east Italy, near Venice, called Pieve di Soligo. The Grottesi began to comment on the character of the opposition which to them was very different from their own:

- *Guarda come so' àvete!*
- Look how tall they are!

- *Sono tutti biondi!*
- They're all blond!

- *Hai visto come son' calmi?*
- Do you see how calm they are?

The northerners were regarded as *più freddo* (colder) and *più corretto* (more 'correct'). In describing these qualities the Grottesi referred to the way in which the Soligani had filed into their seats in a quiet and orderly fashion and were now waiting calmly for the show to begin. This was in opposition to the noisy and chaotic behaviour that they saw themselves as displaying.

In addition however, they used bodily actions to convey the character of the opposition. *Freddezza* - coldness, was described by imitating the impassive features of the northerners: lips pursed and jaw set; shoulders drawn back and breath drawn inwards to indicate a *distancing*, an aloofness, unfriendliness. They imitated their speech, making it sound sharp and staccato, and compared them to Germans and Austrians. *Correttezza* - 'correctness' was also conveyed using bodily actions, although the implications here were less pejorative. The aim was to convey not only the 'exactness' which is perhaps the 'immediate' meaning of the term, but again to express a wide range of meanings including honest, upright, proper, polite, well-behaved and well-spoken. Thus for the Grottesi, the *bodily* attitude, the demeanour and bearing of their opponents bore a direct relation to their character and personality.

The characteristics attributed to and perceived in the northerners were explicitly contrasted with those that the Grottese saw themselves as possessing. Thus, in opposition to the *freddezza* of their opponents, they described themselves as *fuccos'* or fiery:

- semm' fuccos', teniam' lu sang' càvere
- we're fiery, we've got hot blood

Again these descriptions were combined with bodily action conveying intensity of emotion and impetuosity. These were not imitations this time. Instead they were simply *being* intense and impetuous although with an element of self-parody. In the back row, a young male contingent shouted mildly obscene comments at the opposition. As the recording of the programme went on these comments continued to fly across the studio, developing into songs and rhymes. In addition, whenever the Grottese team won a round of the competition their supporters clapped and cheered uproariously and chants went up of GRO-TTA! GRO-TTA! At one point they were reprimanded for failing to clap when the opposition had won. At any break in the proceedings many of the Grottese would get up and wander about between seats, much to the annoyance of the studio staff - it did not do much for continuity. In doing this the Grottese were well aware of their disorderliness *and* of the fact that it was attributed to their being southerners. They viewed the annoyance of the staff with amusement, revelling in the fact that they were uncontainable.

Families

Eventually, the presenter of the show, Claudio Lippi, came on stage, flanked by two stereotypically glamorous and scantily-clad 'assistants'. Lippi introduced himself to the audience in a friendly, familiar manner. He warned them that much of the proceedings would be tedious but urged them to co-operate. Above all, they should clap and smile when asked by the prompter and more importantly, *laugh* at his jokes. A few final touches were made to Lippi's make-up and the show got under way.

First to come on were the two families to the sound of applause of the audience and the jingle of the programme. They stood in a row and Lippi asked each of them in turn who they were, what their relation was to the others and what they did for a living. Immediately the Grottese began to comment again on the appearance of the northern family, their height, the colour of their hair (one was even a redhead), how upright they were. To everyone's amusement, Lippi ducked down as he approached them, pretending to be dwarfed. He then asked the head of the family his name: "Signor Stec" came the curt reply. At this Lippi stepped back theatrically and grunted the name back at him, exaggerating its brevity and affecting a German accent. With further questioning it was noted by the Grottesi that they replied in clear, serious tones. It also emerged that among this family were two cousins who ran small but prosperous businesses and a daughter who was doing Business Studies at University.

Moving on to the Grottese family, he turned to Pasquale, the head of the family, who was beaming all over his face, and said:

come si chiama?
What is your name?

Mi chaiamo Pasquale Iacoviello
My name is Pasquale Iacoviello

Lei è capofamiglia, è vero?
You're head of the family, aren't you?

Si sono capofamiglia
Yes, I'm head of the family.

E che lavoro fa?
And what work do you do?

Pasquale smiled broadly and holding his hand up in the air exuberantly enumerated on his fingers the various forms of employment he had had in his life:

Sono ex-emigrante, ex-barbiere, ex-sarto, ex-fornaio, attuale commerciante
I am an ex-emigrant, ex-barber, ex-tailor, ex-baker, currently a shopkeeper

The competition got under way with one of many inane events. In this case, each family team was required to elicit some sound from a selection of musical instruments. Grotta won, to great applause from their support and more chants from the back row which took far longer to subside than desired by the producers. The next event was model car racing. This time the Grottese lost after their representative, as people put it, *s'emozionò* - got over-excited and his car left the track. At this outcome, to the dismay of the producers, there was only a smattering of applause, the northerners being in too small numbers to create the same degree of noise as their opponents. They were reprimanded by the prompter for this. However, he only succeeded in annoying the more partisan elements of the Grottese support.

The Entertainers

For the next round, each town had to present a local entertainer. Talent in the field of public entertainment should, said Lippi, be a feature of *il Buon Paese.* Grotta was represented by *i Tarli,* who had appeared at the *Festa de l'Unità* and whose connection with the town was rather tenuous. They were extremely professional and performed a sketch using a Neapolitan dialect and mime. It was, appropriately enough, a mini-satire on the functioning, or malfunctioning, of a Town Hall. The accent situated it in the South where the inertia of bureaucracy is thought to be at its worst.

In contrast, the northerners' entertainer was an old eccentric performer dressed in breeches and a feather cap. He somewhat overwhelmed both presenter and cameraman as he danced up and down the studio vigorously strumming his guitar and wailing a traditional song. He then demanded a chair and proceeded to play *Ave Maria* on the top edge of a saw with a violin bow. The audience, including Grottese were in stitches laughing and Lippi was struggling to keep a straight face. This was the first occasion where at least on the surface, the Grottese seemed to be on the side of 'modernity' and the opposition on that of tradition. This will be discussed later. This event put the Grottese into the lead again.

Mastermind

The next round was between the *sapienti* - the 'scholars' who had been nominated by each town. Lippi called upon a member of each family to introduce their contestant. Pasquale's daughter was introducing Grotta's contestant but Lippi had forgotten who *she* was and asked her to remind him:

> *Sono la figlia di Pasquale, il capofamiglia.*
> I'm Pasquale's daughter, the head of the family.
>
> *Ah si! La figlia degli 'ex'*
> Ah yes. The daughter of the 'ex's'.

We will return to this joke in the discussion which follows these descriptive accounts.

This competition began with a play-off which involved the mayors from each town who had to talk for exactly one minute about their own town. Whoever, managed to get more words in was the winner. Grotta's new communist mayor won easily. However, what was interesting about even this small event was the *content* of what was said. Grotta's mayor spoke so fast that it was difficult for even those who knew him to pick it up properly. However, it was clear that he concentrated almost all of his *discorsetto* [3]on the present economic condition of the town, its recent and future development and its importance as a crossroads (cf. chapter 6). He described it as situated on the edge of the *aree interne* of the province and adjacent to the motorway from Naples to Bari. The consequence of this and the fact that there were other (historically and geographically) important roads passing through the town, was that Grotta was a *nodo stradale*

[3]little speech

importantissimo - an extremely important crossroads which had the potential to develop into an important transport centre for the whole province.

By contrast, the talk given by the *sindaco* of Pieve di Soligo was dominated by talk of the importance of the town's *patrimonio artistico-storico-culturale* - artistic-historical-cultural patrimony. He spoke of the beauty of the town, its historical roots, the buildings with which it was endowed and the art work to be found in the churches. Special mention was given to a 15th Century tapestry which the *comune* was going to restore.

Before they exited to allow the quiz to go on, each was asked what the money would be spent on if they won. Grotta was going to spend it on building a *scuola materna* - nursery school; Pieve di Soligo on restoring their tapestry.

The lights were dimmed and Grotta's contestant stepped forward to be questioned.Claudio Lippi began by asking him a few polite questions:

- *Tu sei Dario Merino*
- You are Dario Merino

- *MEN-NINO*

The Grottese corrected him in his deep, gruff voice, his face impassive and serious. Lippi took a sharp step back and put on an act of fear, deference and respect, apologising for his mistake, as if, said one Grottese, he was dealing with a *mafioso*. As further questions were asked, details emerged about Dario's background. He was an unemployed student of classics, trying to finish off his degree and in the meantime doing whatever he could to make ends meet. His chosen subject was Greek myth.

After Dario had been questioned on his subject, the northern contestant came forward. What did he do? He was a businessman with a small but thriving business in parts for light aircraft. What was his subject? War aircraft since 1945.

Billiards and Hair-dos

In the next round, this time a billiards competition, a contrast emerged again. Grotta's candidate was a civil servant in the provincial education department; his opponent was the owner of a battery hen farm. When Grotta lost this round it was again explained by the fact that their player *s'emozionò*. A player who was *più freddo* - cooler - had really been required and they mentioned one in particular who was *proprio come il ghiaccio* - like ice.

While the billiards was taking place, another event had been set up and was taking place in rooms outside the main studio. This was a hairstyling competition. Again each town provided a competitor and two 'glamour girls' were brought on in tight-fitting leotards and performed a dance routine before going off to be models for the two stylists.

By this time the Grottese were trailing having also lost the mastermind quiz. The hairstyling was their last hope of catching up. However, as soon as the two contestants were brought on they knew that their fate was sealed. They put together what they knew about their man, Bruno, with what they could deduce from the demeanour of his opponent and it was obvious who was going to win.

Bruno was short, dark, middle-aged and stereotypically 'southern'-looking. When interviewed, he and his fellow townsfolk were aware of his lack of competence in speaking without sounding *rozzo*. Literally meaning 'rough', this word is frequently used to refer to peasants and southerners and carries with it all the implications of lack of sophistication, sounding strongly accented and dialectal. It conveys quite the opposite of *corretto* and many Grottese cringed with embarrassment as he spoke.

His opponent was tall, blond, female and in her twenties. She wore sophisticated and ultra-fashionable clothing, and when spoken to by Claudio Lippi, came across confidently and articulately. Then came the final blow to their hopes: the theme chosen by the judges for the competition was announced: *la donna del due mila* - the woman of the year 2000. The Grottese resigned themselves to defeat. Being younger, more stylish and modern, the northerner would have no trouble with this theme whereas:

> *Bruno non sa fare queste cose. E` bravo come parucchiere però non è intelligente come quella.*
> Bruno doesn't know how to do these things. He's a good hairdresser but he's not intelligent like her.
>
> *E` 'nu cafun'.*
> He's a peasant.

And so it turned out. The contestants went off to another studio and as they progressed a video of what was going on was broadcast to the audience in the main studio. They were each asked how they were approaching the theme.

The girl from Pieve di Soligo talked about making the hairstyle 'space-age' and explained in detail about the methods and materials she was using to shape her subject's hair. She described her 'woman of the year 2000' as being independent, having more freedom, able to express herself. Bruno on the other hand spoke vaguely about making his

hairstyle *"Femminile, piùttosto donna"* - "feminine, womanly", without mentioning the theme. When quizzed further- the presenter trying to get him to say more about the theme - he replied:

> *- va bene, però la donna è sempre donna.*
> - okay, but woman will always be woman.

In this way he almost brushed aside the theme he had been asked to portray for what he saw as more important - the essential femininity of women. His supporters covered their faces in embarrassment.

> *-Quant'è scemo*
> - What an idiot
>
> *- Che cafun'*
> - What a peasant!

He somewhat redeemed himself in their eyes by putting some coloured hairspray in the model's hair. Some even suggested, though without real conviction, that he might still win. But there was nothing particularly original or out of the ordinary about his attempt - it was just Dallas with a bit of sparkle.

Il croceverbo

With Pieve di Soligo now almost assured of winning, the final event came - *il croceverbo* - the crossword. Apart from the first round with the musical instruments, this was the only other event in which the family groups participated, having been left for the majority of the show to act as presenters of their town's players. This time they were in the forefront again and took their places in separate perspex compartments in front of a huge illuminated crossword board. The event served to stir up the emotions of the Grottesi again. The shouts of GRO-TTA! GRO-TTA! went up once more and people leapt from their seats in joy or despair as a clue was guessed correctly or mistaken. A million *lire* was the prize for every clue guessed correctly. In the end the northerners won this event too and the competition as a whole.

Special guests

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter various people were introduced in between rounds of the competition. These included famous personalities who sometimes stayed to judge one of the events, and a variety of 'interesting people' from around the country. Each did or had done something extraordinary or in keeping with the ethos of the programme.

The first was a woman whose son had died at an early age from a very rare disease and who had, as a result, set up a centre for children with this disease. This interview was used by the sponsors of the programme - the national gas company - as an advertising opportunity. A large blue plastic 'flame' flickered in between Lippi and his interviewee with the company's slogan appearing above them: *"il Metano, ti da una mano"* - "Gas gives you a helping hand".

The second guest was presented as "Italy's youngest company director". At fifteen he was director and proprietor of a small business in Naples which bred queen bees to sell to honey producers. The audience displayed the required gasp of amazement when this was announced. The aim seemed to be to present him as an enterprising whizz-kid. However with further questioning it emerged that the company was only nominally his following the death of his father. He was still at school but also helped his mother run the business and the family farm in Naples. Lippi asked him what his ambitions were and when he declared that he wanted to be a racing driver, the presenter said:

> - *Ah, quanto sei bravo! Speriamo che la tua fantasia sia realizzato*
> - Ah, aren't you clever! Lets hope your dream comes true.

The Grottesi immediately picked up on the fact that he was from Naples. Another southerner on the programme - extra points for the South. One person however, disliked Lippi's attitude towards the boy. He had patronised him and his use of the word *fantasia* was a veiled reference to Neapolitans' reputed tendency for superstition and fantasy. More deprecation of the South in other words.

The final guests were two men from Bologna who had set up a cultural centre in the city to provide an environment in which young people could explore their creative talents particularly in music and drama. They talked of the need in this modern world to hold onto and preserve the cultural traditions of the country, in particular its dialects. Neapolitan was again singled out as being of unique importance.

This reference to Naples was again pounced upon. Although they had been beaten, the show had been dominated by southerners showing that they were *più forte* - stronger, mightier.

Defeat

For the final scene, the Grottesi had prepared gifts of local produce in baskets which they hoped to be able to present to the opposing team - fresh pasta in local forms, sweets, biscuits etc. However, their request was refused and they left offended at the rejection of their gesture of friendship.

After a three hour journey and seven and a half hours of recording everyone clambered back onto the bus tired, irritated, disappointed and certainly not looking forward to another three hours journey back to Grotta. Some people engaged in a post mortem of whose fault the defeat had been, who had *fatto una brutta figura*, who had done well, etc. However, most people tried to go to sleep.

Stories

But this was not to come easily, for a contingent of Grottesi had brought their own wine and began to get drunk. As they did so, they became noisier and started to sing and tell local tales over the bus' public address system.

There was the story of Zi' Armando who, on seeing himself in the mirror in the middle of the night, dressed in new red pyjamas bought in imitation of one of the local *notabili*, thought he had seen the Devil. There were numerous tales of *'Pisciattone'* who was always creating situations or making statements that earned him ridicule: on returning home from emigration he was shocked and dismayed to find his house on the left, when it had been on the right when he had gone away; in addition, instead of putting *"arriveremo il giorno dei Morti"* - "We'll arrive on All Souls' day - on a telegram to his relatives, he put *"arriveremo tutti morti"* because it was less words. Unfortunately this means "We'll all arrive dead". In this way then, the return journey was made more bearable.

4. Discussion

> The social positions which present themselves to the observer as places juxtaposed in a static order of discrete compartments, raising the purely theoretical question of the limits between the groups who occupy them, are also strategic emplacements, fortresses to be defended and captured in a field of struggles.
> (Bourdieu 1984: 244)

> Interacting individuals bring all their properties into the most circumstantial interactions, and their relative positions in the social structure (or in a specialised field) govern their positions in the interactions.
> (ibid: 578-9 n.25)

4.1. Introduction

I will now try to interpret more closely the structure and content of the event, looking at what people said and did and at their relative positions and attitudes. I suggested at the start of this chapter that what was involved here was a mini-ideological battle. It was an unusual and unique encounter without far-reaching consequences, but nevertheless *real* between core and periphery. It manifested in microcosm the relationship between a dominant and subordinate culture. I have attempted to show throughout the thesis that this relationship involves struggle and that this is *symbolic*, as well as political and economic struggle. What is at stake in the struggle is people's *identity* and power over the classification within which this identity is defined. As stressed, identity is not something that is paraded all the time, but is rather an embodied sense of place which varies according to context and the specific relationships involved. I will begin by looking at the first episode - the making of the cameo of Grotta.

4.2. The Core Comes to the Periphery II

The setting

To begin with, the setting chosen of the making of the film was La Fratta - the dingiest, most insanitary and abandoned part of town, representing the closed world of tradition and in complete opposition to the modern Grotta with its expansive, sprawling urban area with modern shops and large multi-roomed villas and flats, only briefly looked at by the producers. Within this structured setting, it is possible to discern an even more carefully controlled and organised structure.

At the centre

At the centre are the film crew with their equipment. They are stylishly dressed, fresh-faced, aloof and on occasion irritable and patronising. Also entering into this inner circle, but only on the instruction of the *regista* are a selection of local characters chosen to perform a specific function. They are brought one by one under the gaze of the cameras. In opposition to those by whom they are being observed, these 'specimens' are either embarrassed or somewhat bemused by the proceedings. Their dress and appearance speak of the opposite of style and sophistication (drab well-worn clothes, wrinkled faces, gnarled hands, toothless smiles); their movements and speech are awkward and self-conscious and when these do not satisfy the requirements of the film crew, they are adjusted.

On the periphery

At the margins, and practically-speaking, excluded from the action, is a crowd of local onlookers gathered to watch the spectacle. The intrusion of anyone from this peripheral area is 'forbidden' except on the terms of the 'core' - and when it occurs (through all the attempts to contribute and through the general atmosphere of banter) it is met with annoyance, retakes and editing. Thus, all 'non-legitimate' contributions are rejected.

Clearly then, the film crew - representatives of the core - are doing the representing and are in overall control of the means of representation. This is not just a matter of owning the cameras but also of the fact that the *legitimacy* of the core to act in this way is accepted.

Peasants and classification

Looking more closely at this first episode, it can be seen that although the local 'characters' are anonymous individuals as far as the viewers are concerned, they are in fact 'well-known' - they conformed, or were made to conform to the familiar stereotype of the simple, rather coarse, southern peasant, steeped in tradition. Indeed this view that they are representations of a type is strengthened by their anonymity, opposed as it is to the friendly familiarity assumed by the interviewer.

The clarity, control and attention to detail of the film crew could perhaps be put down to some notion of technical necessity. This would be to miss the point however. Rather, the precision with which the movements, appearance and speech were controlled testifies to an implicit recognition on the part of the film crew of the importance of the body as a vehicle of signs indicating social position and identity. Thus, the simple

adjustment of a man's arm and the raising of a head to make it visible to the cameras is not a neutral act, but is charged with significance. It is an act of *classification*. His face is made visible all the better to see his craggy features and toothless grin which immediately place him in the category of 'southern peasant'. Hence, both in the individual treatment given to this 'peripheral' specimen and in the way in which he was represented in the film, the relationship between core and periphery was embodied and reproduced. His role, as the role of all the Grottesi throughout the episode was essentially *passive*. All their embellishments and independent contributions were excluded.

It can be seen then that the film crew, in coming to Grotta, made no attempt to characterise the town other than in terms of the kind of images through which the south of Italy has been continuously stereotyped. They arrived, set up their own 'mini-core' into which those at the periphery could enter only on the condition that they behaved appropriately. Within this inner circle, all risk was reduced to a minimum. Never for a moment stepping outside their own worldview, they reproduced their own core representations of the periphery. It is not surprising really since this is precisely what what would best serve the requirements of the programme with its ideal-typical *buon paesi*.

4.3. The Periphery Goes to the Core II

In this second episode, the situation becomes more complex. However, there is still a discernible structure.

The setting

This time the producers are on their 'home ground' in the TV studios of Rete Quattro in the centre of Rome.

At the centre

At the centre - i.e. on the studio floor - are the programme's producers, the cameras and cameramen, a variety of studio personnel and the show's presenter. As in the previous episode, they are in overall control: not only do they own and have access to all the technical means (lights, sound, cameras, props, the studio itself) and expertise for making the programme, they also have sole access to the national network through which it is to be transmitted. In thus presenting itself to the whole nation in uniform form, Rete Quattro takes up the position of *orthodoxy* the normative, legitimate view. Things are thus even more carefully controlled.

Entering into this central area, again only on the conditions set by the core, are the teams from each town. To minimise risk and to ensure their competent and active participation and co-operation, they have been brought to Rome for rehearsals three days previously. Thus, when they appear, they perform relatively confidently and with the sophistication demanded by the context.

At the periphery

Around the perimeter are the supporters of each town. This time they are not entirely excluded, but, being on 'core' territory, are drawn within the objectifying gaze of the cameras and participate through controlled applause and cheering. Their excesses in these respects and their forays out of their seats are frowned upon.

North versus South

The picture does not end here however. In addition to this core-periphery opposition, manifested in the distinction between those on the studio floor and those spectating, is a further division between the opposing factions of supporters and the opposing teams. Represented here then, is the reciprocal popular opposition between North and South - the two groups are separated on either side of the studio and pitted against each other in competition. The television producers, at the centre, occupying the position of orthodoxy, naturally assume the role of arbiters. The fact that the Soligani, as northerners, are in some ways closer to the 'core' does not upset the structure since in relation to the representatives of Rete Quattro they are almost as provincial and peripheral as the Grottesi. Moreover, their oppostion in this context, mirrors in many ways the popular opposition between northerners and southerners which tends to be symmetrical and reciprocal in character[4].

Again in this episode we see the element of control and risk elimination by the core and again the importance of visual images as conveyed by the body.

This time however, it is not a matter of gnarled hands and wrinkled faces. From the core point of view, what it is important to emphasise at this stage are the forward-looking modern aspects of the stereotypical *buon paese* and indeed the modernity of the core itself.

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[4]For example, when described by northerners as *terroni* - another derogatory term for peasant - the Grottesi response is frequently to attack similar peasant-like characteristics of northerners, calling them *polentoni* - from the maize-meal staple of poor northern peasants, *polenta*. In no way then do they exalt the peasant status with which they are ascribed or reject the higher status to which the northerners lay claim.

Thus rehearsals ensured that participants held themselves correctly and came over as suitably sophisticated. As I found out in conversation afterwards, they were taught how to move and stand and hold their faces while on stage without showing nervousness and without slouching or shifting about. These strictures ensured once more that risk was reduced to a minimum and that the desired image was created - not least, I would suggest, through a sense of awe and respect for the television authorities with their vast array of technical equipment and expertise.

Families

When the participants come on stage they are not just a group of individuals, but *families*. In each family there are offspring and each member of each family is 'normal', well-dressed and made-up, sophisticated looking. There is no trace of the peasants who characterised the film. Moreover, although they take part in the first and last rounds of the competition, for the rest of the time, the families act as presenters of other participants. In other words, their function is largely symbolic - they are there to represent one of the essential aspects of the buon paese.

Modernity

The overwhelming emphasis and thrust of the images at this stage of the programme, and indeed overall, is towards modernity. Although the past and tradition are evoked as essential to the ideal 'good town', in evoking this past the standpoint is a distanced and distancing one[5]. The past and tradition do not govern the future, but are commodites, to be owned in the progression towards modernity as defined by the core. This can be seen throughout this episode.

Jokes

One of the ways in which this is achieved is by means of humour. The seemingly innocent jokes and gestures of the presenter all serve to emphasise and draw attention to regional differences while at the same time relegating them to an inferior status. Each, like the adjustments made to the 'characters' in the first episode, is a classificatory act which places the core in the position of orthodoxy and reproduces the asymmetry of the relationship. Thus, Claudio Lippi, situated centre-stage, assuming a personal familiarity

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[5]Here we can recall again Hoggart's analysis of popular culture and his assessment that the success of the 'core' images depends partly on the extent to which they can identify with [i.e. appropriate] peripheral attitudes (op cit 1957: 170). A similar point is made by Lombardi-Satriani (1974: 15).

with his viewers (and thereby laying claim to their agreement with respect to values and attitudes), steps back in surprise at a German-sounding name, feigns deference and respect for Grotta's *sapiente* as if he were a mafioso, and draws comical attention to Pasquale's many jobs by calling his daughter *"La figlia degli 'ex'"*. In this last case, the effectivity of the joke is not a matter of numbers. Rather, Lippi, consciously or not, was picking up on a characteristic which immediately classified and stereotyped Pasquale as southern - the typical *figura mista* of the South who makes ends meet in a fragmented economy by turning his hand to whatever he can, whenever he can. This is in stark opposition to the entrepreneurial characteristics of the northern family.

Orthodoxy

In the background to these kind of acts are the supposedly neutral, taken-for-granted aspects of the show:

1. The objective characteristics of the studio with its bright flashing lights, glitter and advanced technology.

2. The nature of the competitive events chosen as distinguishing criteria between towns - billiards, toy car racing, 'mastermind', a crossword, hairstyling with 'the woman of the year 2000' as its theme. All of them mundane, everyday skills, some more banal than others. All in keeping with the undisturbed, unchallenging vision of *Italia allegra*. In the hairstyling. Grotta's stylist fails to produce an effort which goes beyond his own regional stereotype of the characteristics of 'woman'. The northern stylist on the other hand, not only creates a suitable hairstyle but is able to justify it in suitably modern terms, making reference to woman as strong-willed and independent.

3. The strategic positioning of 'glamour girls' in highly visible areas of the audience. The image of the core should not be tarnished by any provincial ugliness.

4. The standard Italian spoken throughout.

5. The special guests - except for the Neapolitan boy who was patronised about his ambitions.

Comic attention is not drawn to any of these things. They are all taken-for-granted.

4.4. The Grottese response

Identity

So far the picture has been somewhat one-sided with the core in almost complete control of the means of representation and thus able to reproduce its position of dominance in the relationship. What has happened to the Grottesi? It would appear that they are not active participants in the proceedings at all. This would appear to contradict some of the evidence which shows them as extremely *active* in defining themselves, particularly in relation to the northerners. However, the point is that there is very little room for the Grottesi to define themselves on their own terms - the core is infinitely more powerful. In addition this process of representation has a long history going back at least as far as Unification when the South began to be seen as backward and uncivilised. Hence, the active construction of identity by the Grottesi is going on here within a pre-existing classification and a pre-existing set of power relations. Their sense of place within this arena cannot, without great difficulty, be any more than a matter of finding a position within an already existing system of representations.

What then, was the nature of their participation? How was their sense of place manifested in this episode? To begin with they did enter into the event and in doing so they ran a great risk. As we have seen they had little control over the event and whether they would emerge with a *bella figura* or a *brutta figura* was by no means certain[6]. It was seen as an opportunity to *mettere Grotta sulla carta* - to put Grotta on the map. From the outset then, taking part was seen as a matter of entering into a wider arena - not an arena however, with which they were entirely unfamiliar. After all people at Grotta watched and enjoyed and talked about programmes such as these every day; they were Italians too; they accepted the legitimacy of the programme.

In looking more closely at the various stages of the event it can be seen in the first episode that the choice of *La Fratta*, and the choice of the peasants who participated in the film, was not made by the TV company but by the local organisers of the event- the councillor and others involved in the new administration. Hence it would be incorrect to say that these choices were imposed by the film makers. Clearly however, they complied, collaborated, with the core in the production of the programme and the creation of the images that have been described. What were their motivations in doing so?

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[6]This is typical of core-periphery relations. The latter can enter into the discourse of the former but there is no guarantee of success and a high risk of failure and rejection

There are various levels at which this co-operation or complicity can be viewed and the same people may have more than one reason. It can be seen in terms of local politics. Participation in the programme was an ideal way for the new administration to score points off their Christian Democrat rivals. To have succeeded in bringing a national television station to the town was a testimony to their ability as administrators and their freshness of approach. It was generally agreed that the stagnant DC administration could never have pulled off such an event. Participation was also a matter of scoring points off other local towns. According to one of the local organisers, the producers had originally been destined for nearby Ariano, but they had succeeded in diverting them to Grotta.

In my view however, the most significant reason for co-operation is that so many of those involved ascribe to and accept the culture of the core, or at least seek to do so. As we saw in the previous chapter, particularly in the annual festivals, they are distanced from tradition and seek to associate themselves with modernity - the modern, television image of tradition is more familiar to them than the traditions themselves. They are well aware that they are seen to be backward in the way portrayed by the film. This awareness of their own inferiority in the legitimate classification can produce a number of reactions and in the case of the choice of location of the film, does so. For some then, core values become their values. They take up the same standpoint of observers of their own culture and 'naturally' make the same decisions as the core about what is a suitable location for the film.

The distance felt from what is regarded as local and traditional seemed to depend on the position of the individual in the social structure. Hence for some of the older peasants and artisans involved, the film made little sense at all. However, out of respect for a legitimate authority, and a sense of hospitality, they agreed to take part. Their subsequent embarrassment was from a general feeling of ambivalence towards and unfamiliarity with, modernity.

Acceptance of modernity and ambivalence towards it can also be seen in the characteristics of those who went to the studio in Rome. As we saw they were all members of the local middle class. Everyone was dressed in a suitably sophisticated manner, most of them having made an extra effort for the occasion. There was no-one with their trousers tied up with string or with gnarled hands and toothless grins. However, in the ostentation of the local artist, the nervousness about going to Rome of one member of the party and the embarrassment of the rest, a certain ambivalence towards the core environment is manifested - a self-consciousness that showed that they did not feel entirely at ease.

In the studio we saw the Grottese actively defining themselves in opposition to the northerners. However, in positioning themselves *vis-a-vis* the opposing team, they selected qualities, characteristics and physical attributes which form part of the stereotypical representations of both themselves and the northerners. This came out most clearly in the opposition between *freddezza* and *correttezza* of the northerners on the one hand and their own fiery and exuberant nature on the other. They observed these characteristics, they talked about them, and they were seen to be the reason for the outcome of particular episodes: their billiards player lost because *s'emozionò* - he got over-excited. This reaction is indicative of their acceptance of the stereotype. They were entering into the discourse of a pre-existing system of representations.

This is not to deny that the evidence was there before their eyes, or to suggest that these stereotypes are entirely false. This is obviously not so. Their physical characteristics *were* noticeably different; and in terms of the occupations of the participants, and in many other contexts, the stereotypes were satisfied again and again and consequently reproduced. Nearly all the northerners were engaged in businesses and entrepreneurial activity. Grotta's contestants for their part produced several typical southern figures: Dario Menino, a student of Classics with Greek myth as his chosen subject, unsure when his degree would be finished and in the meantime *arrangiandosi* - making ends meet; the billiards player, a civil servant in the education department- perhaps not startling, but again public functionaries are typical southern figures; Pasquale, the *figura mista* has already been mentioned. The point is not to suggest that the representations have no reference in reality, but rather to look at how they are manifested in the relationship between core and periphery.

Discorsetti

The mayor's speeches are significant as perhaps the only occasion in the whole programme when the towns actually get to speak for themselves. Yet even here, what they have to say is relegated to a low status since as far as the core is concerned, what is important is the number of words and only a minute is given in which to put across their potted self-image.

Nevertheless, for our purposes the content of what was said is extremely significant. Given the opportunity to present Grotta to the outside world, the mayor turns not to the *pacchiane* nor to the local characters from the film. In opposition to the image created by the programme producers, he chooses to talk about the significance of the town's modern developments, its progress towards modernity, its importance as a transport centre.

Grotta situates itself firmly in the modern world. The northern mayor on the other hand chooses to emphasise tradition and cultural patrimony. And in the choice of use of prize money the Grottese again choose development, the Soligani, tradition. This, and the content of the speeches seemed to me to indicate again an ambivalence among the Grottese about their actual position in the modern-backward, *civile-incivile* classification. It indicated a need to parade its efforts in becoming modern which is in turn revealing of its lack of modernity: lack of a *scuola materna* in the town is simply a sign of backwardness. Any town which was really *civile* would take such an amenity for granted. The Soligani by contrast were advanced enough and sufficiently cultured to be able to spend money on the luxury of maintaining artistic and historic artefacts.

Embarrassment

As we saw, the final blow to their hopes of winning was the hairstyling event. However, the blow was not so much to their hopes of winning, as to their *identity*. This event showed them up for what everyone else knew them to be - uncultured, *incivile*, incompetent in this wider, modern arena. Hence their intense embarrassment at their stylist's efforts, hence his *own* embarrassment. He *knew* he was not doing or saying the required things, that he was not competent in this arena. The manifest competence of the northern representative did not help matters any, serving only to point up the Grottesi's lack of *civiltà*.

Rejected gifts

The *real* final blow to their identity came with the rejection of the gifts that they had prepared for presentation. As well as being yet another rejection of their attempts to make independent contributions to the event, it was a rejection of them as persons and the hospitality and friendship that they saw themselves as embodying. They were offended.

Stories

On the way home, the Grottesi told stories. This was for me of great significance. Throughout the event, the producers had ignored, rejected or suppressed any independent contributions by the Grottesi. For the most part these contributions were in conformity with what the producers wanted. However, the story-telling revealed a facet of Grotta and of Grottesi tradition that was entirely missed by the producers. Away from all the stereotypes and external representations to which they are constantly responding in their everyday lives, this seemed to me to be a glimpse of Grottesi as they see themselves; a

piece of myth that was for no-ones benefit but their own. Here they seemed to *forget* about themselves sufficiently to *become* themselves.

5. Summary

The television event was unique and unusual, but not for that any less significant. I have attempted to show that every aspect of the event, both in structure and content, mirrored in microcosm the relationship between core and periphery. At both stages of the making of the programme, the agenda was set by Rete Quattro - the representatives of the core. They set limits to the participation of the Grottesi - representatives of the periphery - minimising risk to themselves while suppressing any independent contributions that the Grottesi might wish to make. The Grottesi were made to conform to the familiar stereotypes of the South and southerness. When they did so 'naturally', comic attention was drawn to the fact. Finally the Grottesi themselves, actively *chose* to conform to this image in some contexts. This complicity in the aims of the core revealed an acceptance of, an orientation towards modernity, as well as an actual *distance* from tradition. At the same time, acceptance entailed risk. Their identity was at stake, and as was shown, ultimately they were ridiculed.

In all of these ways the images and stereotypes of backwardness and modernity are reproduced. The ability of Grottesi to define their identity outside of these images and stereotypes thus remains limited.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
Conclusion

1. Introduction

From the outset, this thesis has been an attempt to explore a *relationship* - that existing between a relatively small peripheral town in southern Italy and the wider 'core' culture into which it has become integrated; and specifically to ask how the inhabitants of the town deal with involvement in this relationship in their everyday lives. Within these overall aims, my objectives fell into three interrelated categories: methodological, historical and ethnographic. In this chapter I would like to conclude by assessing the extent to which these objectives have been reached.

2. An approach to core and periphery

The main methodological objective was to develop an approach to core and periphery. Why was this necessary? Firstly it was clear early on my fieldwork that it was *not possible* to describe Grottaminarda and the social relations that made up the life of the town, without considering the wider core-periphery relationship. Here was a town in the hinterland of Naples, situated on the main motorway linking the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic coasts in the southern part of the peninsula; a rapidly expanding population of 10 000 or more; a Fiat factory on its doorstep; a high proportion of the population having or attempting to obtain University qualifications and/or jobs in the national bureaucracy; more than 20% of the population receiving welfare benefits; every family having some experience, directly or through a close relative, of emigration; everyone with access to modern consumer goods and a national deregulated media.

With this information, no assumptions can be made about people's values and ideas. It is nevertheless clear that the town was deeply involved in a wider set of relationships and that this thesis hinged on how these were to be characterised.

Secondly, the available literature did not seem to provide a suitable answer. Throughout the 1960's and 70's there was a great deal of attention paid to the issue but few attempts were made in the specific context of the Mediterranean to develop it and by the late 1970's there were renewed calls (notable from Davis 1977 and Boissevain 1979) to address the problem of core and periphery. This seemed to be a signal to *stop* thinking

about it. From then on, very little was published on the issue in Mediterranean anthropology.

The two main approaches that did emerge I have labelled 'action theory' and 'dependency theory'. The arguments for and against both of these approaches were set out in detail in Chapter 1.

In action theory the 'buzz word' was *'process'* as opposed to function. It had the merit of attempting to free the individual from the constraints of corporate groups and institutions and of trying to situate the analysis within the movement of social life. It tended however, to be too microscopic, to privilege the interpersonal (and indeed the emic) level, to the exclusion of wider historical and structural relationships. To the extent that the relations between core and periphery *were* considered, and they were not a major focus of the approach, they were seen as links between persons. 'Pivotal' individuals , variously described as brokers, entrepreneurs, mediators, were seen to 'fill the gaps' between local society and the 'outside world'. The fact that these individuals tended to be politicians, administrators and representatives of the authorities and the judiciary, led to an overdue emphasis on the political arena as the crucial arena for linking levels. Finally and paradoxically, the attempt to free the individual from the constraints of society, tended to trap him in a new set of constraints - those of the self-interested, maximising entrepreneur.

Dependency theory was directly concerned with core-periphery relations and diametrically opposed to action theory. It succeeded in bringing recognition to the relationship between the development of capitalism in the West and the process of underdevelopment in the Third World. It showed that underdevelopment was not an innate condition but the product of a relationship; and it provided a broad framework within which to understand core-periphery relations. However, any attempt to *apply* it as a means of looking at the dynamics of these relations in a specific context, seemed to come to grief. This was a result of the fact that although it purported to be historical, the model was in fact overformalised and mechanistic. Human actions on the periphery were represented as knee-jerk responses to the homogenising force of late capitalism and the specifics of local cultures became epiphenomena of 'basic' economic forces. In addition analyses tended to be quantitative. Finally, although it dented the unilinear assumptions of modernisation theory it did not in itself escape from them. It maintained at least an implicit faith in the categories of 'advanced' and 'backward' and in the goal of development - 'self-sustaining growth'.

In summary, neither of these approaches seemed to be appropriate for my purposes - there had to be a way of describing social life in Grotta without representing the locals as either self-seeking maximisers or mindless puppets of capitalism. In addition there had to be a shift away from the predominately political and economic focus of these approaches. What then was required?

Most importantly, in my view it was necessary to take a closer look at the terms 'core and periphery'. From this I concluded a number of things:

1) that the terms were the latest in a long line of dichotomies that have absorbed the social sciences since its inception, including Durkheim's organic and mechanical solidarity; Tönnies' *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft;* Redfield's folk-urban, and the traditional-modern oppositions of the Chicago school; Levi-Strauss' hot and cold societies etc. Underlying the complexities of these different conceptions there seemed to be something in common - a congruity of structure.

2) that the terms do not describe discrete geographically definable entities, but were rather inherently relational and difficult to discuss without lapsing into tautology.

3) that the relationship they describe is a real or ideal 'us' and 'them'.

4) that they are *evaluative* and asymmetrical. They are not 'pure' descriptions or neutral tools of analysis, but representations of a relationship. This is not to dismiss them but to recognise that they actually have a history and play a part in the reproduction of the relationship they represent.

This then, defined the level at which the problem was to be tackled - the level of representation - and always with the recognition that the terms I was using to describe the relationship (core and periphery) contained the same evaluative force as the representations I was going to analyse. In other words, it became clear that it was important to question not only the cause of 'peripherality', 'backwardness', 'underdevelopment' (Was it the fault of the people or the system?) but also to inquire into the very existence of the categories 'peripheral' and 'backward' as applied to particular areas or groups of people, since this classification was itself an instrument in the perpetuation of the conditions it described.

3. The historical development of a classification

From this methodological starting point, I sought to show how the representations and the classification had emerged historically in the context of South Italy and of its integration into a wider core; and then to show how this process had affected Grotta.

This historical perspective was not just a matter of meeting the demands for 'more history' in Mediterranean anthropology. Much of the power of the representations of the South as they manifest themselves in the lives of people at a local level today, is derived from the legitimacy they have acquired over the past hundred years. In addition, presenting an account of the incorporation of Grotta into a wider sphere of relations was a means of overcoming many of the problems of both action and dependency theory. In doing so I followed the example of Sydel Silverman in an article written as early as 1965. In a study of a town in central Italy she showed that stages could be identified in the history of core-periphery relations such that not only were there changes in the personnel linking the two levels but that the very nature of the relationship itself was transformed. It seemed to me that the neglect of this possibility was present both in the action theorists' conceptualisation of the relationship in terms of interpersonal links *and* in the formalism of dependency theory.

Using Silverman's approach then, I described (in chapters 2 and 3) three stages in the integration of the South and of Grottaminarda into the core, particularly focussing on the way in which the representations of the ensuing relationship were reproduced and transformed at each stage.

Stage 1: the first stage that I identified was that beginning with the Unification of Italy in 1861. It was then that the South became 'backward' - not because of particular processes which produced a particular condition, but because it was *brought into relation with* the North. Until this point it could not be called backward because it did not exist as 'the South'.

As the new nation state emerged and the relationship between North and South developed, so did the images and representations of the South. The particular way in which Unification had been achieved produced a great deal of turmoil and increased poverty in the southern countryside, leading to outbursts of violence and brigandage. This provided fuel for the rapidly growing view in the North that southerners were barbarous, lacking in civilisation, innately inferior, criminal. As in other European contexts (notably

Ireland) this representation was embraced by a group of physical anthropologists who gave it a quasi-scientific expression in terms of positivistic evolutionary theory. While these racist views did not have a lasting effect on science and were amply contested by other social theorists in Italy, they *did* endure, particularly in northern public opinion.

At Grotta during this period, the process of integration proceeded slowly. Because of its position the town had had trading links with the outside world for a long period of time and these continued on after Unification. However, despite the increase in the number of incoming bureaucrats and professionals, representatives of the new state, there is little evidence to suggest that they had any great effect on local social relations at the time and people's links with the outside world remained few and far between.

Stage 2: The second stage of integration that I identified was that between the two wars - the 'Fascist interlude' as it is sometimes called. Most observers regard this as a period of stagnation in local social relations as the Fascist state imposed severe restrictions on the movements and actions of the population and put an end to the train of protest and change that had followed the Great War. This is emphasised by the way in which the local elite at Grotta manoeuvered itself into all the important positions in the local Fascist hierarchy thus maintaining its interests intact as well as its relations of patronage to the rest of the population. The latter for their part had little allegiance to the regime and continued to live as before, minding their own business and attempting to make ends meet. Thus, in many ways the imposition of the regime was nominal and on balance the relationship between local and national levels remained a distant one. At the same time it was vital to temper this view with a recognition of the very profound effects that the regime *did* have.

Already after the Great War, people at a local level had had their horizons broadened through having to fight for their nation. Mussolini continued to foster this new-found national identity through the uniform organisational, administrative and political structures that he introduce at all levels of the local community - always accompanied by ceaseless nationalist propaganda. From 1922-43 people's lives were imbued with the trappings if the regime, from grafitti on walls, uniforms and insignia to printed and broadcast propaganda; and from the ruralisation programme and the Battle for Grain to recreational organisations, literacy campaigns and incentives to help propagate the Italian race.

During this period, the Southern Question as it had come to be known, was in fact *banned* as was indeed the whole idea of the South as Mussolini strove to impose the

nationalist ideal. It is difficult, consequently, to comment on representations of the South at this time.

Overall, despite the continued distance between local and national levels and the largely formal-institutional changes of the regime, Fascism nevertheless created in embryo the basis for a new relationship between core and periphery. The local elite became answerable to a provincial and national hierarchy and the spread of party political organisation meant, at least in theory, that authority came from position in the Fascist Party and not from personal prestige.

Stage 3: The last stage to be identified was the most recent one -- from the end of World War II until the present. In the previous two stages I showed that while there were significant changes in the core-periphery relationship, these did not drastically alter the local nature of the social structure and value system of peripheral communities like Grotaminarda. Also, while the representations of the South as backward were an important part of core-periphery relations, serving to categorise the region and maintain its relative position of inferiority in the dominant classification, at the same time, those representations did not as yet form part of people's everyday lives; part of their identity and self-representation.

With the onset of this third stage the situation changed drastically and social relations at the local level *were* transformed. People throughout local communities - and not just the local elite - began to participate directly in the wider system through state intervention, the education system, emigration, the mass media and through involvement in wider markets, particularly for consumption.

This stage was divided into two phases - pre- and post-1960, each corresponding to a phase of State intervention in the South. In the first phase resources were pumped into the area largely to support agricultural reform and public works programmes. Contained in the logic of this intervention, also known as the period of 'pre-industrialisation', was a conception of the South as a *problem* area. There was less reference to southern culture in this representation but rather a technical and economic problem with technical and economic solutions. However, this did *not* rid it of its evaluative content and through further analysis of the logic of intervention it was possible to see the reproduction of the backward image - implicit in the State's approach was a civilising action.

At Grotta all of this had little effect although there was much talk of development plans throughout the late 1940's and the 1950's.

At the same time the new influences of the core were increasing. So, with the onset of the 1960's, the national, so-called 'economic miracle' in full swing and the number of emigrants increasing rapidly, the second phase of this stage began. The tenor of local politics changed drastically. The old guard of notables were replaced by upstarts who had come through the ranks of the party system and had received a now more widely available tertiary education. A new technical language was used in dealing with problems; the amounts of State contributions went up drastically; development plans were drawn up and national issues were discussed or local problems explained with reference to the national situation. There was talk of putting the town 'on the road to material and economic progress'. The first graduates from relatively poor peasant backgrounds began to emerge and the number of professionals and experts went up rapidly.

Through all of these things, Grottesi from all backgrounds began to participate directly in a world that went far beyond the boundaries of the community. In doing so they came face to face with, and began to respond to, the representations of the core - both its positive self-image and its negative image of the periphery.

The State decided that the South was now 'ready for take-off' and a plan of development by industrial poles was put into effect. In doing so the State seemed to have an almost blind faith in the process of modernisation and did not doubt that the South would 'catch up' with the rest of the country. Again the implicit civilising action is present. When the policy failed to produce the desired effect the reaction from some quarters revealed the continued inferior position of the South in the dominant classification. It was seen as a parasite, sponging from the State, a lead weight on the progress of the country as a whole. Such views were published in the national press, and broadcast on television; workers in southern factories were labelled as lazy and incapable, because of their peasant mentality, of adjusting to an industrial context.

Emigrants were subject to similar images. They encountered the prejudice of the northerners first hand in the factories and poor housing of the North - particularly Turin. Negative images were reproduced in films and on TV; the incompetent southerner looking for work in northern cities is a common one. At the same time they began to participate in new lifestyles - emigration brought them face to face with 'modernity'; with what they 'should' be like according to the core.

What must be emphasised about this whole process of integration was that it did not by any means mean an end to the existence of the periphery; even in the constant homogenising utterance of the core of the command - *"Be like us!"* - manifested in its images and representations, is a concomitant distancing process. This is reflected in all the measures taken to try to stop the South 'lagging behind'.

4. Experiencing backwardness and modernity

Hence we come to the main ethnographic problem of the thesis: what is the response of the Grottesi themselves to this situation in which they are constantly classified as backward, despite the process of integration? How do they deal in their everyday social relations with the continual representation of southerness as co-terminous with backwardness? My aim in answering these questions was to show that dealing with these representations affected all levels of people's everyday lives and involved them in a symbolic struggle for position within the dominant classification. It was a matter of *identity* - of the way in which they presented and represented themselves in social life and a matter of minimising or accepting the symbolic appropriations of the core. At the outset, as we have seen, they occupy a subordinate position in the classification and moreover, the core is largely in control of the means of representation and is thus better placed to present the existing classification as legitimate and neutral.

Given this situation, it seemed that rather than describe the way in which the Grottesi 'constructed' their own identity, it was more appropriate to view them as having an internalised sense of place. And having presented a contemporary picture of the geographical, demographic and economic characteristics of the community in Chapters Four and Five, the rest of the thesis devoted itself to looking at this sense of place as it manifested itself in the relationships of everyday life, guiding the decisions people made and the things they did and said.

I divided these relationships of everyday life into two broad and interrelated categories. In the first I looked at relations internal to the community, at people's sense of place in the immediate and mundane relationships of the family and the life-cycle; of class and status; of politics. I then turned to people's sense of place as members of a community, to the contexts in which they wore the 'badge' of identity. The aim was less to show the complex functional interdependence of all these relationships than the way in which they were imbued with references to representations of backwardness and modernity.

In looking at the family and the life-cycle I tried to show that there was, perhaps not surprisingly, a very strong ideology surrounding familial relationships. However, it was also apparent, in accordance with what has been said up until now, that people were well aware of the popular imagery of their attitudes in this sphere. They knew that they were represented as being tied to the family and 'backward' in their attitudes to the relations between the sexes. The responses to this situation were not uniform but all of them illustrate the point that the core classification is very difficult to ignore, constantly demanding some response.

Thus in naming practices, for example, many people were moving away from the more common traditional names and from the custom of naming children after grandparents and patron saints and adopting unusual or foreign names. This was one example among many of people attempting to distance themselves from their own past and associate themselves with what they perceived to be modern, even if their action is not explicitly expressed as such.

Throughout the upbringing of children this kind of distancing and association was apparent in the things children are encouraged to and discouraged from, doing - the speaking of dialect was one example of the latter among many families. It was perceived as a hindrance to getting on in the modern world; as uncivilised and uncouth.

It was also apparent in the likes and dislikes that many young people developed as they grew older and in the way they interrelated and talked about interrelating. Adolescents were perfectly familiar with popular national and international fashion in clothing, hairstyles, music and even T.V. programmes. In terms of the relations between the sexes there was a degree of conflict between generations. Children criticised their parents for adhering to old customs in placing restrictions on their movements. This was particularly lamented by young males who, at local discotheques, tended to outnumber females by about eight to one. Although this figure is extremely revealing of the actual practice of restricting women's movements, the existence locally of a view which sees this behaviour as demonstrating a lack of modernity, *una mentalità arretrata*, itself demonstrates a change in attitude and this must be recognised. Many young women obeyed their parents but were apologetic to their friends about the former's lack of understanding of *persone evolute* - i.e. people who have 'moved on', up the scale towards modernity.

Not all such conflicts of attitude resolved themselves so easily. In other cases feelings of failure to measure up to the standards of modernity, of incompetence in

participating in the expected manner or a perceived inability to find a wife, ended in suicide.

Attitudes to sex before marriage were also revealing of people's self-consciousness about where they fit in, in relation to the dominant representations. Once again, the accusation of backwardness was directed at those who sought to impose sanctions on girls who were discovered to have failed to remain *casta e pura* before marriage. Many poured scorn on such 'old customs' as the 'crime of honour' and the display of the bloody sheet after the consummation of marriage.

In all of this, the way in which the core operates must be remembered. People do accept the classification of the core. But whatever the extent to which they do so, the fact that their practices are classified as backward is important in itself. In so classifying them, the core has a very powerful tool for their eradication. And of course things do not stop there. Such negative classifications are always accompanied, explicitly or implicitly, by an orthodoxy - a positive representation of the modern and civilised way things should be done. Hence, in relation to sexual practices, contraceptives are advertised nationally on television and in magazines, generally portraying one of two images: that of the middle-class mother liberated from the burden of too many children; and that of the responsible loving relationship between two young people. The views were presented as legitimate, with their moral acceptability being put to one side. The position of orthodoxy was assumed. Whether people accept such views or not is, of course, quite another matter but the point is that they are not *asked* if they think them acceptable; they are presented with them as acceptable by an authority that in many other respects they *do* accept as legitimate.

When it came to class and status, I tried to show that in presenting and representing themselves as members of a class or social stratum, people tended to situate themselves *either* within groups that went beyond the local level (i.e. national social strata like *il ceto medio, la classe operaia, la piccola borghesia*), *or* to make local distinctions by appealing to standards of backwardness and modernity (*arretratezza* and *civiltà*), the content of which is largely defined by the core.

It was shown that before the War, Grottese society consisted of three relatively clear strata: a minority of landlords and professionals; a small group of artisans and tradesmen; and a majority of peasants. It was also shown that at least within strata, honour was the principal criterion of distinction. Honour had two aspects - a self-assessment or sense of honour which was then dependent on the public recognition of the

claim to honour. This public recognition was dependent on close contact of members and the effectivity of gossip.

Contemporary Grotta was shown to have a more fluid and heterogeneous structure and although class stratification was accepted it did not manifest itself clearly and the explicit honour code seemed to have disappeared. People seemed to be still engaged in the same kind of assessments but the standard to which they were appealing was not the ethic of honour but a standard of relative position in an externally defined classification of backwardness and modernity.

Thus the sense of honour has become a self-consciousness about where they fit in, how they measure up in relation to the dictates of modernity. There is thus no drastic change in values but a subtle accommodation or appropriation. Images and representations of backwardness and modernity thus become the 'gossip' of modernity.

Looking at the various strata of Grottese society it can be seen that criteria of modernity and backwardness are used in both the self-positioning by members of each group and the way in which they are positioned by others.

This was apparent in the choices they made and the things they did and said in a wide range of contexts from attitudes to education and emigration to their taste in different areas of consumption - from food to household decoration and furnishing and from clothing and fashion to media likes and dislikes.

But although each social stratum made appeals to criteria of backwardness and modernity in all of these areas, usually attempting to accept the latter and dissociate themselves from the former, this did not imply a simple homogenising process or a watering down of the nuances of meaning. On the contrary each class always seemed to find ways of maintaining distinctions - for example the *ceto medio* always found ways of showing that the appeals to modernity of the *strati poplari* were vulgar and uncivilised - their competence in dealing with the modern world was called into question. In clothing for example, the *strati popolari* are as much concerned with the latest fashions as anyone else and in this they associate themselves with images of modernity. However, as far as the *ceto medio* are concerned, the civility of the *strati popolari* in these matters is open to question because they buy their clothes at the market rather than in slick high street stores . The *ceto medio* thus always see themselves as one step ahead in their modernity.

In looking at the political arena, the symbolic struggle for position within the dominant classification was not as apparent as in other contexts. The prevailing local

attitude towards politics and politicians was one of cynicism. It was assumed that anyone involved in politics was in it for their own private interest. In a precarious economic situation in which the *economic* struggle for resources is keen, this is not surprising. Hence, those who criticised the DC for clientelistic behaviour and for their lack of political culture, frequently behaved in precisely the same way themselves. To do otherwise was to be *fesso.* In the same way, many who professed strong political views or ideological convictions found no contradiction in voting for a relative standing for a party with views and practices quite at variance with their expressed beliefs.

At the same time, a concern with backwardness and modernity was not entirely lacking from political discourse. This was in fact demonstrated in Chapters Three and Four in discussing the tenor of political language in the 1960's (Chapter Three, sections 5.2. & 5.3.) and the importance of position int he 'natural' classification in the provincial struggle for resources (Chapter Four, section 2.5.). In Chapter Eight the same concern was manifested in a number of ways, but particularly in the attempt by the new left administration (and within that administration, particularly by the PCI) to institute a new relationship between *"cittadinanza e potere"* - "people and power". The motives of those at the centre of this attempt were, in my view, entirely genuine, and involved a complete rejection of what they regarded as the endemic backwardness of local political practice. Many more people, while cynical about the outcome of such action, agreed with it in principal - and on the same grounds of its departure from backwardness in local political practice. hence, they showed a marked ambivalence towards their own political action, being embarrassed or apologetic about voting for people they regarded as lacking in modernity but recognising at the same time, the obligation and/or necessity to return favours granted or court future favours.

From the political arena,the thesis then moved on to look at those relationships when people wear the 'badge' of identity, that is, in the more formal and quasi-formal contexts in which people reflected on history and tradition, when they expressed allegiances or a sense of belonging in festivals, or community identity through local rivalries or in expressing their position in relation to 'the north' as an abstract category and 'northerners' as they encountered the few who were resident in the town. It was perhaps in this area that the ambivalence and self-consciousness became most apparent. There were several local historians who attempted to establish a noble and ancient history for Grotta as well as a popular story analysed by them all, that St. Thomas Aquinas was born in the town and performed a miracle there.

What is interesting about this local history is less its factual content than the *way* in which it is told. No-one told the St Thomas story without in some way undermining it and at least hinting at a scientific or 'truly' historical explanation. And in most of the historical accounts there is an attempt to enter into a 'modern' educated discourse about history - the concern is less with local tradition than with establishing the credentials of the town in a wider sphere - hence there was a concern with historical and artistic patrimony for example.

It was shown that people engaged directly in national concerns (e.g. the Peace debate and the discussion of how to remove American missiles from Italian soil); at the same time local rivalries continued but their *content* took on a national flavour - in local football tournaments the young supporters, most of whom support northern teams like Juventus and Inter Milan - emulate the behaviour of football fans throughout the country.

In the past, most festivals were religious affairs celebrating patron saints or particular holy days. They were usually used as a means of expressing community identity. Today these are few and poorly attended. A new category of 'core' festivals have become important. In this category people seem simply to do what everyone else in Italy does and give the appropriate present to the appropriate person *as advertised on television* - there does not seem to be any trace of adapting core culture to a local idiom.

In the major festivals that take place today, from the main *festone* and the PCI's *festa de l'Unità to Carnevale,* there is, amidst references, in fact *contained* in references, to tradition, a clear orientation towards modernity.

In relations with northerners and when identifying themselves as southerners, the Grottesi showed a marked ambivalence. The animosity towards the North and northerners is derived largely from the latter's' constant denigration of the South. It was shown that the image of Grottesi held by northerners staying locally conformed very much to the familiar stereotypes of the South. The same northern prejudice has been experienced by Grottesi at first hand through emigration. However, in rejecting this prejudice, the Grottesi do not entirely reject the modernity of the North. While the *freddezza* of northerners is criticised, people's attitudes to the North are not for the most part oppositional. Instead, anxious to dissociate themselves from what is regarded as backward in their own practice, they *accept* the definition of backwardness as defined by the core, rejecting only the reference to themselves.

As stressed the central aim of the thesis was to explore the *relationship* between core and periphery. For much of the thesis, the focus was on the Grottesi. Chapter Ten served the purpose of turning attention to the other side of the relationship - the core - and showing how it operates in reproducing the negative stereotypes of the South and positive representations of itself. This in turn illustrated the *effectivity* of these stereotypes in the reproduction of the relationship itself.

Grotta's participation in the television show was a mini-ideological battle. It provides a paradigm for core-periphery relations in the south Italian context. Every aspect of the event resonated with some aspect of the relationship, saying as much about the core's attitude towards the periphery as it did about the Grottesi attitude towards the core. The structural positions of those involved, the relationships between them, their attitudes, dispositions, demeanour, all spoke of the relationship, continually pointing up the modernity of the core and the backwardness of the periphery. However, modernity was not 'paraded'. Instead it formed the taken-for-granted, unspoken aspects of the event: the modern, technically equipped studio, the style, dress and attitude of the film crew when they came to Grotta, the mundane nature of the competitive events chosen as distinguishing criteria between towns, the neutrality of the presenter, taking up the position of arbiter between regionalisms.

And it was regionalism, 'tradition' that was displayed and paraded. Comic attention was drawn to many of the identifiably 'southern' aspects of the Grottesi; careful adjustment was made to the bodily stance of the 'local characters'. This last was perhaps the most poignant and penetrating sign of the everyday symbolic struggle in which the Grottesi are involved: a film director adjusts the head and arm of a peasant as he is about to be filmed pressing grapes with his feet. The peasant obligingly looks up and smiles his toothless smile - not a technical act serving the abstract cinematic requirements, but an act of classification that reproduces the relationship between core and periphery and the subordinate position of the Grottesi within that relationship.

What then has been achieved in this thesis? Firstly, it has been established, I hope emphatically that, as Silverman puts it "the reference point of value and status no longer reside in the community" (Silverman op. cit.). Quite clearly, Grottesi participate directly and daily in a culture that extends far beyond the boundaries of the community to national and supranational levels.

Secondly, in describing the nature of this participation, an ethnographic account of a South Italian town in the 1980's has been provided. This is an important contribution, given that the vast majority of published accounts of the South are based on fieldwork carried out in the 1960's. An update of this material was required.

Thirdly, it has been shown that participation in this wider arena is, for Grottesi, a matter of *struggle* - not just for economic resources and political power, but *symbolic* struggle for position within a classification, and for the maintenance and/or transformation of their identity. In most contexts this revealed an ambivalence of the Grottesi towards modernity. Although in many ways they were familiar with the trappings of a modern lifestyle, this had not necessarily changed their relative position within the dominant classification. Thus although many strove to accept the dictates of modernity, they did so in a manner which for those at, or closer to the core merely served to point up their continued backwardness.

Fourthly, the thesis has met the demand for greater attention to history in Mediterranean anthropology. This was not however, merely to satisfy the discipline but was an integral part of the methodological approach. The history chapters provided an account of the progressive integration of the periphery into the core and through this integration, the reproduction and transformation of the negative representations of the South.

Finally, the thesis has contributed to the study of core-periphery relations by providing an approach which departs from the predominant political and economic approaches of action- and dependency theory respectively, and looks at the *cultural* level of the relationship - specifically at the level of representation. The effectivity of representations in shaping the everyday lives of Grottesi has been attested to. This is most definitely *not* to return to a view which denies people at the local level any part in shaping their own lives. The core is not to be seen as a determining, monolithic force. nevertheless it must be recognised that it is infinitely more powerful than the periphery. Any attempt to show the way in which local cultures adapt and appropriate core ideas to their own idiom must be tempered with the recognition of this power and the generally subordinate position of the periphery. The fact that Grottesi in so many aspects of their lives seek to *accept* rather than resist the appropriations of the core should be a reminder that the integrity of local culture cannot be taken for granted. The Grottesi do not so much 'construct' their identity as have an embodied sense of place within the manifold relationships of their everyday lives.

Appendices

Appendix 1.

Glossary of terms in Italian and dialect

ITALIAN	ENGLISH
amaretti	almond biscuits
ammassatore del grano	grain collector (during Fascism)
arretrato	backward
artigiano	artisan
assessore	executive member of council
auguri	best wishes
bomboniera	wedding keepsake; knick-knack
braccianti	landless labourer
campagna	countryside
campo sportivo	playing field
canone	Tax or rent paid to *Comune*
capolista	leader of party electoral list
capoluogo	provincial, regional or national capital
casa popolare	public or semi-public house
cena	evening meal, supper
ceto medio	middle class, strata
civile	civil, civilised, proper
classe operaio	working class
cognato/a	brother/sister-in-law
colazione	breakfast
coldiretti; Coldiretti	peasant smallholders; organisation representing their interests set up after World War II
commerciante	shop keeper
comune	town hall, town administration, smallest administrative /territorial unit
concimi	animal feed
confetti	sugared almonds
consigliere	councillor
consiglio comunale	town council
contadino	peasant
corteo	(wedding) procession
disoccupato	unemployed person
emergente	arriviste
Fascio	local section of Fascist Party
fatto compiuto	fait accompli - particularly in relation to eloping couples
figlio/a	son/daughter
figura mista	'mixed figure' - with reference to multiple unstable forms of employment of southern peasants
la fujita	'flight'; elopement

galantuomini	gentlemen, gentry, with particular reference to emergent landed class in 19th Century
genero	son-in-law
insegnante	teacher
Irpinia	name sometimes used for the province of Avellino
Istituto magistrale	high school for those going into primary teaching
Istituto tecnico	High school for those going into industry
Liceo classico	Academic high school
maestro/a	Primary teacher
mezzadria	Sharecropping
nobile	Person of noble class (18th - 19th Century)
nonno/a	Grandfather/mother
nordici	northerner
notabile	notable, person of local elite
nuora	daughter-in-law
paese	town
piccolo borghese	petit bourgeois
podestà	podesta - non-elected government replacement for sindaco during Fascism
polentoni	'great polenta eaters' - derogatory name given by southerners to northerners. Derived form staple food of northern peasants - polenta.
pranzo	main midday meal, dinner
professionista	professional
provincia	province - next territorial unit after *comune*, provincial administration,
ragazzo/a	boy/girl; young person
regione	region - next territorial unit after *provincia*, regional administration
rozzo	rough, uncouth
scuola elementare	primary school
scuola media	middle school
scuola superiore	high school
sindaco	mayor
sudici	derogatory term for southerners - in fact means 'filthy. dirty persons' and *not* 'southerners
suocero/a -	father/mother-in-law
terroni	derogatory term for southerner, form *'terra'*, referring to tendency of most southerners to be peasants
tomolo	unit of measurement of grain and land. Varies from area to area. Approx. 1 acre.
traianiero	lorry driver

Appendix 2.
Abbreviations

AA.VV.	Autori Varie Various (Authors)
CASSA	Cassa per il Mezzogiorno (Southern Fund)
CBU	Consorzio Bonifica Ufita (Land Reform agency for Grotta and 27 other *comuni*,formerly funded by the CASSA)
CC	Consiglio Comunale (Town Council)
CCIAA	Camera di Commercio, Industria e Artigianato di Avellino (provincial Chamber of Commerce)
CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (National union dominated by PCI)
CISL	Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (National Union dominated by DC)
D.C.C	Delibere del consiglio comunale - minutes of town council meeting
D.P.	Delibere podestarile - minutes of Fascist equivalent of town council meeting
DC	Democrazia Cristiana
INPS	Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale (Social security department)
MSI	Movimento Sociale Italiano (neo-fascist party)
On.	Onorevole
PCI	Partito comunista italiano
PNF	Partito Nazionale Fascista
PSDI	Partito Socialdemocratico Italiano
PSI	Partito Socialista Italiano
SVIMEZ	Associazione per lo sviluppo dell'industria nel Mezzogiorno (Government think-tank for southern development)
UIL	Unione Italiana del Lavoratori (National Union dominated by PSI)

Appendix 3.

Profiles of members of the professional and public sector.

Elite professionals

A. Antonio Morelli is a doctor and one of the leading political and economic figures in the town. He is from a rich peasant family who were able unlike most others to put their offspring through University in the 1950s. By 1970 dott. Morelli had built up a large political following and in the administrative elections of that year gained the largest number of preference votes as *capolista* of the local DC. Subsequently he occupied the office of *sindaco* until 1975. After this, however, he moved to Avellino where he opened a medical studio and sought to cultivate his political contacts at provincial and regional level. In 1985 he narrowly missed election to the provincial and regional councils. In addition to the income from his medical practice, Morelli has recently bought the largest share in Grotta's own TV station, Telegrottaminarda, as well as having a stake in a *laboratorio di analisi clinici* (a private medical tests practice) in Grotta and a large amount of land on which he grows, principally, vines. He also owns several properties at Grotta, both in town and country. His son, Emilio was at the time of fieldwork, about to graduate in medicine and was working in a hospital in Naples. It was generally agreed that the progress of the son in the medical profession was largely down to his father's intervention and many regarded both father and son as "medicaciucce" - "idiot-doctors" of the kind described by Carlo Levi in Christ Stopped at Eboli (pp). Morelli's daughter married into another family of professionals. Her husband, Ciro Nasti, is also a doctor with a surgery at Grotta and was a DC *consigliere* on the town council between 1980 and 1985.

B. Francesco Flammia and his wife Margherita Minichiello are from two of the wealthiest families in the town and together have a kinship network that extends to a large section of the local professional elite. Francesco is a lawyer and the son of a wealthy *commerciante*, Ciriaco Flammia, who had served as *vice-podestà* towards the end of Fascism and as *Commissario prefettizio* immediately afterwards (see Chapter 3: 60). The rest of the latter's siblings were given a higher education while he stayed at Grotta to continue the business. All but one of these siblings are now in professional posts either elsewhere in Italy or abroad. *Avvocato* Flammia has been a DC councillor on the local council since 1980 and collects a high number of preference votes in local elections. His father's sister married Luigi Lazzaruolo another of the early University graduates of artisan background (his father was a *calzolaio* or cobbler). Since then he has gone on to become *Provveditore agli Studi* for Avellino province or in other words Director of

Education and is thus one of the most influential people in the town. Although he is influential in his own right, Flammia's political success is regarded by local people as largely due to the influence of his wife who is generally known as *"la dottoressa"*. Margherita Minichiello is the town's *medico condotto* - the official local doctor appointed by the local authorities particularly for the benefit of poor families and has the authority to grant or withhold free treatment and medicines. She is from a family of local *notabili* and her father was also *podestà* for a time during Fascism. Her brother, Remo, was the town's first qualified civil engineer and he has been responsible for preparing many of the plans for public works in the town. His name appears constantly in the *Consiglio Comunale* in this respect from 1960 to the present day. Between them they own a substantial amount of real estate in the town, particularly in the *centro storico* and like Morelli have stakes in the *laboratorio di analisi clinici* and in the new Savings Bank. In addition they were in the process of setting up another clinic - a *centro medico-estetico* or cosmetic surgeons. Finally, in late 1987 Francesco Flammia became chairman of the recently established *Unità Sanitario Locale* (USL) or Health Board for the district of Ariano which as well as Ariano and Grotta is responsible for 25 other towns in the province. This, of course, increased his influence and that of his wife in the health sector not only in Grotta but over a wide area. It gave them direct influence over tangible resources - new employment decisions, control over the tendering of contracts for any new hospital buildings or health centres in the area as well as for the materials and goods with which these and already existing institutions would be installed. In addition it increased their network of informal contacts among the provincial elite - which was in the first place the basis of avv. Flammia's appointment.

C. Adriano Bianco is the great-nephew of don Tommaso, whom we encountered in Chapter Three, the *notabile* and doctor who faded from the political life of the town after his defeat in the post-war elections. As mentioned the Bianco family was to become prominent again and it is in the figure of Adriano Bianco that this has happened. Like his great uncle, this man is a doctor with a studio in Grotta. In addition he is an ear, nose and throat consultant at the large hospital in Benevento, owns a great deal of land and real estate, particularly in the town centre. His wife, from a family of rich *contadini* is the only person I heard locally being referred to in ordinary usage as *'donna'* Bruna - the female equivalent of *'don'*, the title given to the generations of *notabili* encountered earlier. Dott. Bianco is a DC consigliere on the Town Council and has important friendship ties in the DC at provincial and regional level - not least with Mastella, one of the leading DC 'barons' for the province of Benevento. He was also involved in setting up the new Savings Bank at Grotta.

D. Vito Pelosi is the *direttore* or headmaster of the *scuola elementare* at Grotta, traditionally a most influential and prestigious post. Although he is a member of the local elite in his own right his distinction comes rather from his association with the Romano family who own one of the town's two pharmacies and who, as we saw in Chapter Three, have had a considerable influence on the political and social life of the town. Pelosi's son Gianfranco recently married Maria Romano, daughter of Giovanni who is the official *proprietario* of the *farmacia*. The parents of this young couple set them up in the prestigious Benetton shop which opened while I was at Grotta. Giovanni's brother Elio runs another of the town's most expensive clothes shops. Since the demise of the Monarchist party the Romano family have been little involved in the local political life of Grotta. Nevertheless they retain an important place among the elite with other relatives holding top professional posts. The descendants of don Antonio (see Chapter 3 p 69) have continued in the legal profession. Lucio Romano, don Antonio's grandson and distant cousin of Giovanni is the local magistrate and other members of the family are lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc.

Middle class professionals

A. Antonio Palomba is the town's local historian and is a teacher of Italian, History and Latin at the *Scuola Media* in Grotta. He is from a family of *artigiani* - his father was a *bottaio* (cooper) - and he was one of the first Grottese of such background to graduate from University in 1964. His wife, Angela, is a teacher at one of the primary school annexes at Grotta. She is from the neighbouring province of Potenza in the Basilicata Region. Her family are contadini but have also in recent years made use of changes to increase their affluence and social position. Her brother continues to run the family farm but it is now a highly mechanised and lucrative dairy business. Her sister, also a teacher, married the headmaster of the local primary school in her home town. He is an influential figure in the local DC. Antonio, on the other hand, was one of the two Communist councillors elected for the first time to the local council in 1964. He stayed in this position until his comrades in the PCI got fed up with the way in which he associated with the DC and expelled him from the party. Since then he has continued to call himself a Communist while also fostering his close friendship ties with people like *dott.* Bianco and Lucio Romano, the local magistrate. His wife is even more active in this regard than he himself. The young children of several elite families, including *dott.* Bianco, go to her school (illegally) to do *la primina* - joining the first elementary class a year before they should, thus bringing them on. In addition, she organises parties and celebrations for these other families, doing most of the baking and assisting them with preparations. This is a

considerable workload given the usual size of such celebrations. The Palombas have two teenage children. The elder of the two, Francesco, has just started University in the Law Faculty. Even at the age of 14, however, it was decided that this is what he would do. The Palombas were also one of the first families to buy one of the new large private flats built in the new 'zone of expansion' in the late 1970s. It is spacious and well-equipped with central heating, fitted kitchen, large bedrooms, extra W.C. as well as bathroom, etc, etc. Antonio and Angela have a combined income of around £It.4, 000, 000/month or around £16, 000 a year. For his fifteenth birthday Francesco was given a 125cc motorbike costing £2000 and a large party was thrown as well. The standard of living of families in this stratum of the professional sector can be gauged from these details.

B. Vincenzo De Luca lives in the same apartment block as Antonio Palomba. He is a qualified *ragionere* (accountant) and is one of the few local white-collar employees at the Fiat factory. His wife is, again, a primary teacher and works in nearby Gesualdo. Vincenzo has been a DC *consigliere* on the town council since 1975. His position of influence and relatively wealthy standard of living are again of recent acquisition. His father was a *fruttivendolo* and the family were relatively poor. However, Vincenzo was given an education and encouraged to get a professional post. He worked as a freelance accountant and at the same time cultivated friendships with influential members of the DC. It is said that he not only obtained his own job at Fiat through such contacts but was also one of those who is reputed to have taken money from others to secure them a job at the factory. People also point out wryly that five of the *case popolari* allocated subsequent to the 1980 earthquake went to close relatives of Vincenzo. He has three daughters, two of whom were at secondary school and spoke of becoming teachers or obtaining a professional post.

C. Angelo Pucillo is headmaster of the *Scuola Media*. For several reasons he could have been classified with the local elite: his almost uninterrupted term of office as *sindaco* from 1975-85; his local popularity - he has received more preference votes than anyone else in the past three administrative elections despite attempts in 1985 from within his own party, the DC, to oust him from this position; his close association with many of the figures discussed above - Morelli, Bianco, etc. However, despite these credentials he is not considered to be a member of the elite. He is from a family of *commercianti* who were not regarded as *notabili* Moreover, while he has a relatively rich standard of living, he has none of the extensive economic interests of the elite that we have described. Pucillo's wife is a primary school teacher in nearby Melito. She too is from a family of *commercianti* and her two sisters still run a grocer's shop along *il Corso*. She also has two brothers, both of whom have professional posts. Mauro is the *ragioniere*

comunale - the Town Hall accountant and his relationship with Pucillo put both families in a very politically powerful position. The other brother, Raffaele, works in the *Ufficio Registro* - the Tax Office - at Benevento, and commutes there daily with two other public employees from Grotta. Raffaele begins work at 8.30 and finishes at 1.30 although frequently he works overtime. For many years he worked in other parts of Italy, having to go where he was sent - Milan, Bologna, Genoa among other places. However, he has now managed to obtain a permanent transfer to Benevento. And prior to obtaining a public post at all he owned a bar along *il Corso* close to the Town Hall. However, this closed when he got the Tax Office post. He still owns the site and intends to open the bar again but for tax purposes this is difficult. Both Mauro and Raffaele have very young families. Pucillo on the other hand has a son and daughter both of whom are at University studying law and medicine respectively.

D. Mariolino Bozza is another DC *consigliere comunale* and is one of three brothers who run a *cartolibreria* or stationers in the town centre. Their father was a well-respected Grottese who occupied the post of *primo applicato* - chief secretary - at the Town Hall for many years. All three brothers are public employees also. Mariolino works in the Post Office. For many years he was stationed at nearby Castelbaronia. However,in 1985 he obtained a transfer to Grotta. But for the two years prior to this he had leave of absence from this post as a member of the executive *giunta* on the Town Council. Most of this time he spent running the shop which was, notably, the main supplier of stationary to the Town Hall until the political changes in 1985. Michelangelo, one of his brothers, also works in the Post Office in Calabria and so far has not been able to obtain *spostamenti* nearer to Grotta. Liberatore, the third brother is the *tecnico comunale*, the administration's technician or technical expert, responsible for planning. Together, then, Liberatore and Mariolino are in an extremely strategic position both economically and politically. The close association between Mariolino and Angelo Pucillo makes this position even stronger.

E. Angelo Flammia, Rocco Abruzzese, and Giuseppe Barrasso are all PCI activists and were all elected to the *consiglio comunale* in the 1985 elections. They are all closely related and come from the same area of Grotta, *i piani* - an area in the *campagna* renowned for its Communist tendency. All three are of peasant background. Today, however, all three belong to the professional sector of the local economy. The former two are both secondary school teachers while Giuseppe at the time of the fieldwork was about to graduate in law at Naples University. Most of the time, however, he works for the Provincial Federation of the Communist Party at Avellino. Angelo Flammia was a

member of the regional council from 1980-85, and obtained the second highest number of preference votes in the local elections of 1985 after Pucillo. His wife is also a secondary school teacher. Recently their new house was completed on a plot of land on the outskirts of the town. By no account could any of these men be described as 'peasants'. They belong to the local *ceto medio* and although their identity is intimately tied to *i Piani*, their lifestyle and standard of living are those of other members of this stratum.

Working class public employees

A. Filomena Cataruozzolo is a widow who lives in one of the *case popolari* in Rione Dante finally built in the 1970's to replace the houses of those whose homes were damaged by the 1962 earthquake. Her son, Franco lives with her (and previously two other brothers) in a small two-bed-roomed house. Filomena is a *bidella* at the local primary school which brings her a relatively high wage (as compared with a comparable job in Britain) - £It.1 500 000/month (or around £600). During my fieldwork one son, Angelo was a teacher in an *Istituto Tecnico* in Rome while the other, Nino, was a worker at Fiat and rented his own home for his wife (who was a secretary at the *comune*) and three children. Angelo has since been transferred to Benevento and now lives at Grotta with his mother and youngest brother. The latter, Franco, at the time of fieldwork worked with his uncle making a local sweet called *Torrone* - a kind of nougat. This is a popular product but there were four other producers in the town and since then Franco has set up on his own. Franco's father was from a family that made *Torrone* although he himself was not in this business before his death. Rather he was frequently unemployed and took whatever work he could find. His wife is from a peasant background. The *torrone* business is quite insecure and not particularly lucrative and so it is just as well that Filomena has a stable income. At times Franco has also done accountancy work for friends in small businesses since he spent two years at University studying Economics and Commerce. Once again, then, we see a family combining several sources of income in order to get by. Although Filomena gets a good wage, their lifestyle is manifestly lower than that of the *ceto medio*. They cannot think of annual holidays for two weeks by the sea, far less of going scuba-diving in Tenerife as did Emilio Morelli, the son of a local and influential doctor. Any savings Filomena has, she says, go towards the cost of a visit to Argentina where most of her relatives have emigrated.

B. Pasquale Lepore is a messenger at the Town Hall. He is around 55 years old, has a wife who does not work and four children: a son who is married with a child, is unemployed and who consequently cannot afford their own house and who stay with Pasquale; a daughter who is married to a clerk at the Town Hall and who lives with her

husband's family; a son who at the time of fieldwork was doing military service, had only school qualifications and would be unemployed on his return; a daughter who occasionally got work in a nearby town with a tailoress. Most of the family was thus dependent on Pasquale's £It.1 500 000 monthly wage. He too lives in one of the *case popolare* in Rione Dante and has very little room to accommodate everyone. Other friends explained to me that the reason he never invited me to eat at his home was because he was poor. This is in contrast to many *borghesi* who continually demanded my presence at parties, meals and special occasions. Thus although he had a relatively stable income Pasquale had a much lower standard of living than most of the examples discussed above and the future of his offspring was rather uncertain.

C. Tiziana Cappuccio is a young woman of 25 who has a secondary school diploma and is thus qualified for many public posts. She is from a relatively wealthy background - one of the *ceto medio* of the town. Her father is a *commerciante* and is active in the Church and in the DC. Her three brothers and sisters are all married and work in public posts. Together with a friend she opened an agency of a large insurance company. However, within six months this fell through when the other girl backed out. Since then Tiziana has been applying for public appointments through the national *'concorso'* system. Every now and again she goes to Naples to sit an exam and each time she passes. Then begins a period of waiting for the *chiamata* (literally the 'calling') - in other words the request to begin employment. If and when this comes she will almost certainly have to go to work in Torino or Milano or some other area in the North, at least to begin with. However, the period of waiting is not indefinite and if within a certain time, *la chiamata* has not come, her application expires and she has to go through the whole process again. This is what happens most frequently. Tiziana is currently working as an assistant to a *sarta* (tailoress) in a nearby town.

D. Peppino Trevico is from a peasant/emigrant background. On returning from Switzerland where he worked for several years, mostly as a labourer his father obtained a job as a doorman in a public office. He then succeeded in being made *invalido* and is receiving a State pension. Peppino himself is doing Medicine at Naples University and has been doing so for the past five years, without having sat many exams. Most of the time he cannot afford to stay in Naples and ends up obtaining temporary employment of various kinds at Grotta and consequently not studying. These jobs vary from stocktaking for a friend's business, working as a manual labourer and helping a friend who fixes televisions. In addition he too applies for public *concorsi* but usually without success.

Appendix 4.

Categorical Oppositions of Types of Society and their Characteristics and Qualities.

core	periphery
metropole	satellite
autonomous	dependent
Gesellschaft	Gemeinschaft
developed	underdeveloped
complex	simple
urban	rural
civilised	barbaric
advanced	backward
modern	traditional/archaic/ ancient
central	marginal
dynamic	static
rational	irrational
sophisticated	primitive
open	closed
universalistic	particularistic
heterogeneous	homogeneous
disenchanted	enchanted
organic	mechanical
industrial	agricultural
dominant	subordinate
superior	inferior
great tradition	little tradition
town	country
imperial	colonised
active	passive
impersonal	personalistic
science	art
technology	magic
macro	micro
large scale	small scale
national	local/provincial
cultural	natural
fast	slow
general	particular
haves	have-nots
rich	poor
US	THEM
Mundane/normal	exotic/strange
positive	negative
stylish	artless
mind	body
intellectual	physical/manual
external	internal
good	bad
expanding	contracting
observing	observed
hierarchical	egalitarian
hot	cold
new	old
progress	stasis
right	left
western	oriental
Anglo-Saxon/germanic	Celtic/Latin
literate	pre-literate
North	South
White	Black
Bourgeois	Peasant
normative	deviant
secular	sacred
same	other
identity	difference

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